

# Chiropractic Office Managers

August 22, 2012

Question: Edie, I still do not understand why I can't charge what I want to charge. I hear all of the time that it is illegal for me to offer cash patients a discounted fee. Also, what about patients that cannot afford to pay their co-pays. Mary Ann, TX

Answer: Well, the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General has released [Road Map for New Doctors, Avoiding Fraud and Abuse](#) which is great information for all of us to know and understand. We all need to understand this information.

*This is what they say about waiving co-pays and reducing fees to cash patients.*

*"..... For example, where the Medicare and Medicaid programs require patients to pay co-pays for services, you are generally required to collect that money from your patients. Routinely waiving these co-pays could implicate the AKS (Anti-kickback Statute) and you may not advertise that you will forgive co-payments. However, you are free to waive a co-payment if you make an individual determination that the patient cannot afford to pay or if your reasonable collection efforts fail. It is also legal to provide free or discounted services to uninsured people."*

So **YES**, you can offer free or discounted services to uninsured people THIS IS NOT A CASH FEE. THIS IS A FEE FOR THE UNINSURED and **YES**, you can forgive co-pays for individuals you determine cannot afford it or if you do try to collect and can't. But **NO**, you cannot routinely waive co-



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payments.

This is not a CASH FEE. It is a FREE or reduced fee for the uninsured.

Finally the HHS/OIG says it straight out. The best part is we can reduce the fee for the uninsured patients.

Edie

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**You are required by law to have HIPAA Privacy and HIPAA Security policies and procedures in your office. They must be in writing and you must have documented annual training of your staff (and you).**

**If you still are not convinced, go through this checklist to see if you are actually compliant.**

**All Chiropractic Office Management training course coming soon!**

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**Please visit my website that further explains the HIPAA Privacy and Security rules and more.**

**If you are not compliant, purchase my manuals and get started today.**

**[http://www.iccom.org/index\\_files/ICCOMProducts.html](http://www.iccom.org/index_files/ICCOMProducts.html)**

**email me with any questions you may have: [\(click here to email me\)](#)**