



Invoicing – Getting it Right!

Invoicing has always proved to be an administrative burden for Consultants in Private Practice. In theory, it's a simple and straightforward exercise but all too often Consultants find themselves endlessly chasing payments and unsuccessfully trying to calculate and reconcile the value of debt owed to them. Recovering unpaid amounts, especially those relating to self-pay patients, can sometimes prove extremely difficult. "Invoicing along with Credit Control are our most popular services with clients. The value of debt we are asked to recover on behalf of Consultants can range from £150 to £100,000" says Suresh Sivagnanam, Chief Executive of QMS Healthcare.

The patient registration stage is fundamental to the invoicing process. It is imperative to obtain full contact and insurance details (for patients with private medical cover). Ensuring invoices are completed correctly should result in a more efficient credit management process.

An increasing number of Practices have dedicated patient management systems that provide a combined booking and invoicing module. A good quality invoice will contain the following:

- Full name, address and contact telephone numbers
- Patient's date of birth and sex
- Correct insurance details including pre-authorisation number
- Correct Consultant provider number
- Treatment details including procedure code
- Dates of treatment
- Breakdown of charges
- Total charge

The vital component in the process is timing. Invoices should be sent out promptly and tracked accordingly. "It's all about good house-keeping," says Mr Sivagnanam. A well-organised invoicing system is the most effective way in which Consultants can assess the performance of their Practice and be confident in making an informed strategic decision.