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PRMC Responds to The Wall Street Journal Article:

In This Kansas Courtroom, the Hospital Dominates the Docket
May 26, 2024

As you have probably now read, *The Wall Street Journal* has published an article regarding the crisis of medical debt and the efforts of hospitals nationwide attempting to recoup payment from the more than 15 million Americans who have medical debt. For reasons that are unclear to us, *The Wall Street Journal* chose PRMC as an example of how rural hospitals – and rural patients – are particularly hard hit.

PRMC makes every effort to work with patients to help reduce or eliminate medical debt. Our [Financial Assistance Policy](#) is posted in our lobby and on our website in English and Spanish, and is referenced on all patient bills. Those who qualify can receive either a reduction or write-off of their bill.

We help patients navigate every possible resource to reduce or eliminate their medical debt, while providing as much time as possible for them to fulfill their debt obligation. Please know:

- As long as patients continue to communicate with us to develop an assistance plan, we do NOT turn their accounts over to debt collection or attempt legal action. We only consider legal action after we have worked through our debt collection process, which can take up to a year.
- **No interest is ever charged** by PRMC or our collection agency. Interest is only charged if a court judgment is ultimately entered against the patient/guarantor. That interest rate is set by Kansas statute.
- In 2022, PRMC expanded its Financial Assistance Policy so that those living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line (previously 150%) could qualify for a 100% write-off under the Financial Assistance Program. That change allowed even more individuals to qualify for reduced billings.
- Although some patients may not meet the income level to receive a 100% write-off, they may meet the level to receive either a 50% or 25% write-off.



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- If a patient/guarantor does not qualify under PRMC's Financial Assistance Policy, our Patient Navigator will help them access any other financial assistance option that may be available and assist in the application process. The Patient Navigator is also available to help patients apply for Medicaid assistance or other health insurance options.

Why We're Seeing More Medical Debt

The Wall Street Journal notes that last year PRMC filed more than 400 debt collection suits – many of which had been delayed by the pandemic. A 2023 hospital audit revealed nearly 700 patient accounts were in non-payment status – some dating back nearly five years.

We know there is an increase in out-of-pocket expenses for many insured households – as well as an increase in high deductible health plans. These factors attribute to an alarming increase in underinsured households – and are forcing more underinsured accounts into collections status.

PRMC certainly does support Medicaid expansion in Kansas, as we believe it would benefit the physical and financial health of thousands of Kansans. Until that happens, PRMC will continue to do everything it can to work with patients to address payment for care.

If you or anyone you know needs assistance with a medical bill from PRMC, we urge you to contact our Billing Office at 620-450-1146. We are always here to help, but if we cannot answer, because we are helping others, please leave your name, number and best time to reach you so we can return your call within two business days.

Sincerely,

Tammy Smith, CEO