

**Ministry of Health**

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**Ministère de la Santé**

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73-2020-919

**DATE:** March 30, 2020

**TO:** Ontario Hospitals and Ontario Health

**FROM:** Patrick Dicerni  
Interim Assistant Deputy Minister and General Manager  
Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) Division

Mike Heenan  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Hospitals and Capital Division

**SUBJECT: Tracking and payment for hospital and physician services provided to uninsured patients during COVID-19**

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This memorandum addresses tracking by and payment to hospitals for medically necessary services provided in hospital to persons who do not have health insurance under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), another provincial or federal health insurance plan, or private health insurance.

The Ministry of Health ("the Ministry") continues to request that hospitals and physicians working in hospitals provide all medically necessary services to all persons who present at a hospital, regardless of whether the person has health insurance.

It is crucial at this time that hospitals do not turn people away who are in need of urgent medical care.

Please Note: The Ministry requests that services for uninsured persons be prioritized consistent with the prioritization of services for insured persons. Uninsured persons should not be provided with services currently not available to insured persons (e.g., suspended elective surgeries).

## **Payment Process for Uninsured Patients**

Where applicable, hospitals should endeavour to collect payment for services from private insurers. However, if the patient is unclear whether they have private coverage or relying on the patient's private coverage would delay the provision of care, the ministry requests that hospitals treat the patient as uninsured to facilitate timely care.

Physicians should also continue to use existing billing methods (e.g. reciprocal billing arrangements) for patients who have coverage from another provincial health insurance plan and for those who have federal coverage (e.g. Interim Federal Health).

Where payment from private insurers or another provincial or federal health insurance plan is not available for the services, the Ministry will provide payment through the following process.

## **Service Tracking for Uninsured Patients**

To facilitate reconciliation and payment, the Ministry requests that hospitals track all hospital and physician services provided to uninsured patients using the attached Excel spreadsheet.

Instructions for completing the spreadsheet are provided on the first tab of the document. Please read and follow these instructions carefully.

Separate spreadsheets are to be completed and saved for each month. However, any services provided in March should be added to the hospital's April spreadsheet.

Spreadsheets are to be saved using the following file naming convention:

[Hospital Name]\_[month, year]\_Uninsured Patient Services

For example, Hospital X\_April,2020\_Uninsured Patient Services

Spreadsheets should be submitted on a monthly basis to the Ministry at [healthservicesbranch@ontario.ca](mailto:healthservicesbranch@ontario.ca).

Payments will be made to hospitals from the Ministry as a direct deposit to the bank account the hospital has set up with the Ministry. Payments from the Ministry will be provided on an ongoing basis as spreadsheets are submitted

Hospitals will be required to ensure the distribution of payments to physicians who provided these services.

The Ministry recognises that due to increased pressure on staff resources, hospitals may be unable to submit this record on a monthly basis. The Ministry is prepared to be flexible in this regard to help support hospitals during this difficult time. However, spreadsheets must be submitted within one year from the date of the earliest service documented on the file. This timeframe aligns with interprovincial hospital billing requirements.

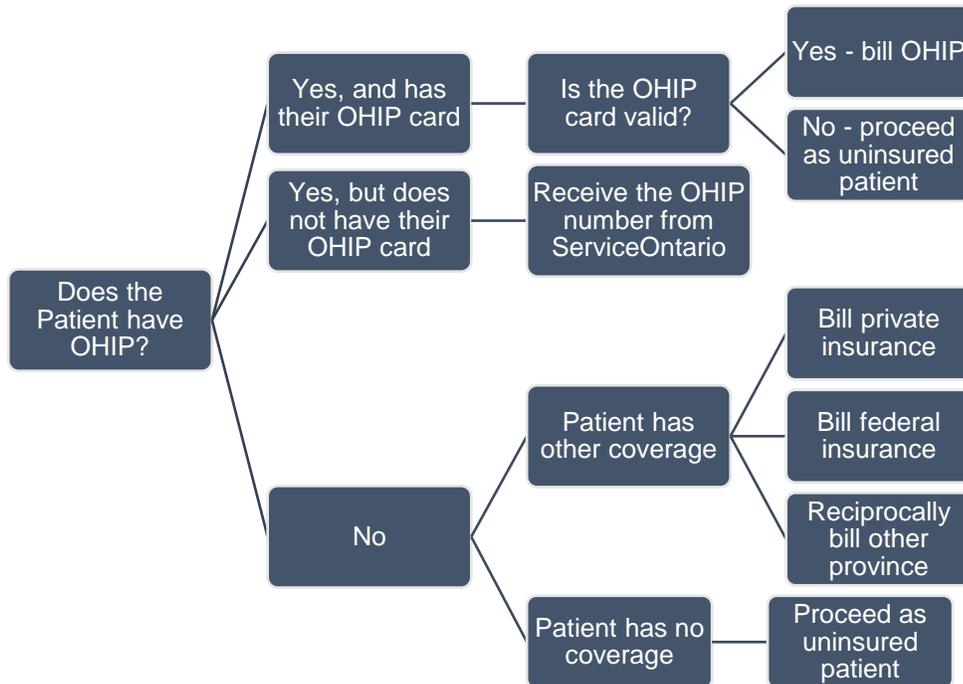
### Payment Rate for Uninsured Patients

Payment for hospital services will be provided at the [2019/2020 interprovincial hospital billing rates](#) for both inpatient and outpatient services and will mirror the payment rules used for interprovincial hospital billing.

Physician services provided in hospital will be payable at the appropriate [Schedule of Benefit for Physician Services](#) (the “Schedule”) rate(s).

### Verifying insured/uninsured status of patients

When a patient presents for care, please assure them they will receive medically necessary care. Following which, please verify their insurance status and proceed with the appropriate payment method according to the following chart.



In cases where the person has valid OHIP coverage but cannot demonstrate proof of coverage at the time of service, please call the 24x7 helpdesk to immediately receive the patient’s health number for use in billing. Please see [INFOBulletin 4797](#) for detailed instructions regarding the 24/7 ServiceOntario helpdesk.

Should you have any questions, please contact [healthservicesbranch@ontario.ca](mailto:healthservicesbranch@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,



Patrick Dicerni  
Interim Assistant Deputy Minister, OHIPD



Mike Heenan  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Hospitals and Capital

c: Ontario Hospital Association  
Ontario Medical Association