5 steps
to implementing an effective automatic payment program

Your guide to achieving 100% patient collections rates

brightree®
by ResMed

> "As DME providers continue to see reimbursements decline and more of the payment responsibility shifting to the customer, AutoPAY has enabled us to capture private pay AR faster with a more secure form of payment versus invoicing our clients!"

Gordon Worley, Chief Operating Officer, J&L Medical Services

Many providers are efficient at collecting the first payment up front, but may fail to secure a credit card on file for future payments. Even if patients are well-educated on their financial responsibilities and billing cycle, taking a few minutes to pay a medical bill can be a task repeatedly cast to the side. This leaves you spending valuable resources calling patients and then waiting for delayed payments to come in.

The easiest way to ensure payments are made on time, every time is through automatic billing.

Communicate with the patient regarding their equipment cost and payment schedule right away, and help them feel in control of their financial commitment. Putting a credit card on file and setting up automatic payments will reduce hassle, save them time, and ensure their resupply cycle is on track. In turn, your team races toward a 100% collections rate and can dedicate more resources toward providing excellent care instead of chasing payments.

Use automatic billing to increase collections rates, reduce DSO, and improve your cashflow.

This eBook outlines five techniques for an effective automatic payment program:

1	2	3	4	5
Establish	**Prepare**	**Rollout**	**Market**	**Maintain**

1 Establish employee expectations

Before you implement your automatic payment program, you will want to ensure that your staff understands your policy. Empower them with tools and training to effectively execute the new policy and communicate with patients. Don't forget: sales, operations, and billing staff are all on the same team and should be ready to take action and follow through when it's time for the rollout.

Financial policy best practices

- Set up automatic payments for rental equipment and supply replenishment for all patients
- Collect co-pay/coinsurance and deductible up to the allowable amount
- Set up electronic delivery of email invoices and notifications before a card is charged

Inspire your team

Create measurable and achievable targets for your employees, and maintain an open conversation about your progress. Encourage staff to be productive with weekly staff meetings to review achievements and set team goals, and create the momentum for a new wave of billing success.

Drive success

Set your exception criteria for patients required to use automatic payment program, and stick to it.

Exceptions
5%

Rental and resupply **95%**
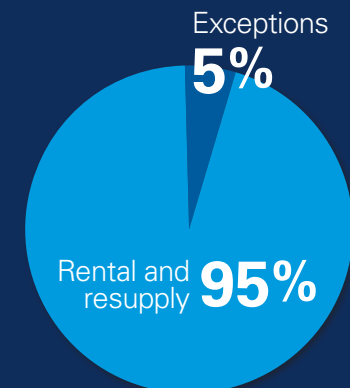
2 Prepare to launch

It's essential to have both internal and external policies in place for patient financial responsibility. One important foundational decision you need to make is: what types of patients are eligible for automatic billing? Once you've established that, you'll need to develop an internal policy for enrolling patients in your payment system and communicate the policy company-wide.

Designate team leaders

When launching any new program, product, or service, your staff needs to know who's giving direction and who will be following up with them throughout the process. Identify your team leaders or managers who will be supervising the rollout of automatic billing, and inform staff of who they can turn to if they need help.

Build trust with consistency

Every patient should receive the same introduction to their financial responsibilities, and providing a script for employees will help create a consistent intake process and prevent miscommunication.

Script Example:

Addressing referrals

Have conversations with your referral sources early on and advise them of your new payment policies.

> "Mrs. Patient, it looks like we received your order from your doctor, and we can have your equipment out to you by the end of the day. I just need to verify a few items first. **Insurance – Address – Payment**
>
> Since this equipment is a rental, the system will not allow me to proceed with the order without a form of payment for the first month's rental amount and future monthly charges. You will receive an invoice for your monthly amount due and will be notified before your card is charged. Will you be using a check or credit/debit card today?"

3 Rollout new policies

The key to a successful automatic payment program is ongoing patient communication. The best opportunity to educate and set expectations is during the patient intake process.

Communicate patient expectations

■ Designate staff responsible for patient intake and make adhering to your automatic payment policy mandatory for all qualified rentals. Ensure that staff understand the new financial responsibility policy and can clearly explain the process to all patients.

■ Help patients understand that automatic payments are safe and secure, and reassure them that notifications will be sent prior to any charges appearing on their account.

■ Empower patients by highlighting these benefits of automatic billing:

- **It's easy and convenient (especially for caregivers)**
- **There are no service charges or late fees**
- **Patients receive advance notice of charges**
- **No more buying postage to mail checks**

It's to your advantage to allow for all types of payments to accommodate patient needs. This can include Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Amex and even HSA/FSA cards.

86%
of consumers still receive a paper medical bill

Only 21%
want to use a check to make healthcare payments.

4 Market to patients

It's imperative to not only inform your patients about your improved payment process, but help them understand why and how they'll be using this new system.

Keep the communication going

Even after patients enroll in a new payment program, sometimes that's only half the battle. Marketing is the best way to ensure they continue engaging with automatic billing and experience the intended benefits. Use multiple marketing tools to broadly communicate the policy, its expectations, and auto-pay advantages to patients.

You can reach your audience using:

Your website	**Flyers**	**CPAP packets**
Delivery packages and vehicles	**Desk displays**	**Retail signage**

Stay competitive

The number of automated payments is growing at a rate of

111%

year over year.

5 Maintain performance

It's not enough to establish the policy; you must hold staff accountable for carrying it out on a daily basis. This is not a "set it and forget it" strategy, and you'll need to monitor your progress and tweak your system as needed.

Stay on track

- Set target goals and recognize achievement
- Use reporting tools like dashboards to monitor progress and areas for improvement
- Perform weekly and monthly staff check-ins
- Have an open channel of communication with your staff

Improve cashflow

73%

of providers say it takes one month or longer to collect from patients

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With Brightree Patient Collections' AutoPAY, you will have already collected **+90%** of the time when the invoice is due.

Checklist for implementing automatic payments

This best business practice checklist for top-performing HMEs will help you improve collections rates while providing excellent care.

Have an internal policy in place for patient financial responsibility

- ■ Determine what types of patients are eligible
- ■ Communicate the internal policy company-wide
- ■ Assign responsibility to all staff for making changes
- ■ Develop useful tools to implement the new policy
- ■ Train staff on how to have the financial conversation upfront with patients
- ■ Hold staff accountable for carrying out the policy

Develop an external policy for patient financial responsibility

- ■ Communicate the policy to referral sources with a face-to-face meeting or phone call
- ■ Use multiple methods to communicate the policy to patients – including flyers, letters, emails, and web announcements

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"AutoPAY enabled us to improve our patient collections by **22%** in the first month."

Tara Ellison,
General Manager, HME,
Geneva Woods Pharmacy
& Healthcare Services

Patient Collections is not just sending invoices or moving patients to a collection agency. Brightree Patient Collections has the only all-in-one, complete solution to get providers paid faster, improve efficiency, and allow your staff to concentrate on higher payoff activities.

Gone are the days of billing patients, waiting for them to decide when they want to pay, and worst yet, chasing them down. We've identified all the reasons patients don't pay and developed automation tools to solve them.

Never wait for payment again. Patient balances are automatically taken care of when patients use AutoPAY, helping to guarantee that you get paid the right amount at the right time.

We all know the benefits of paying a bill online, but it can only take you so far. AutoPAY offers more than just recurring payments; it provides better patient engagement by communicating that an invoice is ready to be paid weeks before it is due. After a clear notification, AutoPAY automatically charges the patient's credit/debit card or bank account for the entire balance. AutoPAY is the solution to securing timely payments for home healthcare providers.

Stop chasing payments, and provide exceptional care by empowering patients to take control of their financial responsibilities. Sign up for AutoPAY to experience increased engagement, better cashflow, and improved patient outcomes.

> "AutoPAY has helped us collect a higher percentage of our patient AR. We saw a huge jump from $20,000 to $60,000- $80,000 a month being collected [with AutoPAY]. Getting a credit card up front really helped us collect much more timely, helped our cash flow, and helped us get our equipment back when that was necessary. Collecting that credit card up front is huge."
>
> **Ryan Soules,**
> President, Sound Oxygen

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For more information or to request a demo   **brightree.com/consult   1.833.916.1554**