



QUESTIONS TO RATE A BILLING COMPANY

The SASA PPBU does **not** endorse or rate any Practice Management or Billing Companies, although we regularly receive requests for referrals from SASA members. We are well aware of the differences in ability and performance of the various companies, but it would be inappropriate for SASA to make any specific recommendations. We are able to provide some guidance and have, therefore, created a scorecard in order to assist members in rating the various offerings and making an informed choice.

We have divided the 27 assessment points into 4 sections.

- A- These are extremely important and really not negotiable, and you should be careful of companies that fail this section
- B- These are very important areas and companies that do not score well here should be approached with care.
- C- These are important but negotiable within the bigger framework
- D- Nice additional perks to have and shows a company involved with the profession.

A. Extremely important

| Activity | Yes | No |
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| 1. Cost of the service is based on receipts (money banked). This pays for performance achieved and incentivises the company to collect as much as possible of your money. In the SASA survey this is the norm in 76% of cases, 20% were paid on turnover (Your work) and 3% were paid a fixed fee regardless. | | |
| 2. Payments from both funders and patients must be into your own bank account, not the billing company or any other 3 rd party. This helps avoid pilferage. | | |
| 3. Does the individual or staff who will actually be directly communicating with your patients regarding their accounts have professional inter-personal skills? This individual represents you and your practice and you may be held personally accountable for their interaction with your patients. | | |
| 4. Does the company generate reports on a monthly basis? Turnover, receipts, total outstanding value, Age analyses, 120 day report, Bad debt and discount. (Age analyses % should roughly halve every 30 days) | | |

B. Very Important

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| <p>5. Does the company have adequate segregation of duties? Fixed data, billing and debtor staff and allocations staff should check each other and no single staff member should collect, receive and invoice same money as a precaution against accounts being closed or written off and money lost.</p> | | |
| <p>6. Is there a complete audit trail tracking each transaction to a claim? This is your protection in that every action in an account leaves a trail, meaning that nothing can be deleted or removed without you being able to see it.</p> | | |
| <p>7. Does the company have a full service, from receiving and billing the work through electronic submission to funders, communicating with patients and following up on an account till its paid and then finalising it on the system?</p> | | |
| <p>8. Bad debt: Can the Company quote you examples of bad debt in clients with your anticipated billing profile?</p> <p>The 2016 SASA survey showed the following statistics: 29% of respondents had a bad debt % of less than 2.5% 32% of respondents had a bad debt % between 2.6 and 5% 13% of respondents had a bad debt % between 5 and 7.5% 18% of respondents had a bad debt % above 7.5% And 8% didn't know their bad debt rate.</p> | | |
| <p>9. Is the administration fee reasonable in comparison to other companies?</p> <p>Is their administration fee, an all-inclusive fee, i.e. are there additional costs. e.g. Billing Program, electronic submission, computer costs, postage, telephone calls and costs if client pays by credit card. (Some companies absorb this cost and others pass it on to the client)</p> <p>Many of these costs are out of your control and most companies charge an all-inclusive fee and no initial set-up fee.</p> | | |
| <p>10. Does the company take responsibility for Stale Accounts and Stale debts - what is their policy around this? If their staff made a mistake, do they admit and cover the account or are you out of pocket?</p> | | |
| <p>11. Is their turnaround time on accounts submitted less than 48 hours during the usual course of events? (Remember that there is no point in the company having a 48 hour turnaround if you take a week to submit the work to them)</p> | | |
| <p>12. Does the company have the ability to take cash or credit card payments from patients?</p> | | |
| <p>13. Does the company assist you with the provision of estimates and quotes, essentially assisting with obtaining informed consent?</p> | | |

B. Important

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| <p>14. Is it easy, safe and convenient to submit your billing slips to the company? This will range from state-of-the-art iPad and Phone programs through Dropbox, scan to e-mail, fax, courier or your delivery thereof. Is the data storage secure, PoPI compliant and accessible to you?</p> | | |
| <p>15. Do they have a policy on writing off accounts, i.e. who makes the decision to go legal, i.e., what is your exposure for their decision making?</p> | | |
| <p>16. Do they represent sufficient individuals in the discipline in order to be able to identify trends in the industry and be able to address them at senior levels? Do the medical funders provide dedicated support to the company if needed?</p> | | |
| <p>17. Initial set-up and Induction-Are they able to do the full registration with funders and have a system to support those new to practice through the first steps and time in private practice?</p> | | |
| <p>18. Coding & Training - Do they understand coding, are they trained in the current coding manual and are they able to offer in-house coding support?</p> | | |
| <p>19. Does the company have a direct line for your consultation should there be a concern, query, urgent bedside estimate or billing-related question? Is there ONE dedicated person for your practice who takes ultimate responsibility for your accounts?</p> | | |
| <p>20. Is their contract reasonable? What length of contract do they require, what notice period is required and how easy is it to leave if you are unhappy</p> | | |
| <p>21. Do they have an up-to-date knowledge of funder tariffs? Are payment arrangements explained, with pro's and con's and their impact on a practice? Is advice offered when new arrangements/networks are introduced to the industry and the process facilitated by the company?</p> | | |
| <p>22. Does the company have a proven track record and are they recommended by colleagues with business acumen who have been with them for longer than 6 months? Does the company service other anaesthetist specifically?</p> | | |

B. Nice-to-Have

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| 1. Accounting service: Do they liaise with your auditors and does the company have the ability and understanding of what is necessary to provide to auditors/attorneys? | | |
| 2. Do they supply or sponsor anaesthetic cards for your practice if required? | | |
| 3. Handovers: Is this done with In-house legal or a separately-contracted lawyers? If In-house collectors, what is the cost of this compared to baseline cost- are you paying more for poor work? Is the debt collected with legal costs included for patient? | | |
| 4. Do they use Lawyers for collection if all else fails and who pays these legal costs? Many lawyers add their costs for the patients account and you only pay Sheriff's costs. | | |
| 5. Does the company offer real time, at the bedside cost estimates, which can be done on a smartphone or iPad? | | |