



IMPORTANT LEGAL INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Medical Debt Collection in Oklahoma

This card provides judges and attorneys essential insights into updates for medical debt collection laws and patient protections in Oklahoma.

This Bench Card has been created by the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation as a resource for judges and lawyers. Bench Cards do not represent statements of law by any Oklahoma Court and do not constitute legal advice.

OKLAHOMA ACCESS JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

This guide, developed by the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, is designed to assist Oklahoma judges and legal practitioners in applying recent legislative updates related to medical debt collection and healthcare price transparency. New state statutes now require medical providers to demonstrate compliance with transparency requirements and provide proof of debt before they can obtain a default judgment in court. In cases involving the collection of medical debt, this card provides a quick-reference guide to the relevant legal standards and procedural requirements.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: Key Changes in Medical Debt Law

Three recent legislative changes significantly reshape how courts handle medical debt cases in Oklahoma:

1. **Transparency in Health Care Prices Act (2021)** – This law aims to reduce the burden of medical debt by requiring medical providers to publicly post pricing for common services (either electronically or on their website). The intent is to promote cost transparency and help patients make informed choices before receiving care.
2. **HB 4184 (2024)** – Effective in 2024, this act mandates that any party seeking to collect medical debt (including creditors, debt collection, or third-party collection agencies) must include the petition proof of the debt and evidence of compliance with the transparency law. Without this documentation, the case cannot result in default and may not be able to move forward.
3. **SB 889 (2025)** – Effective November 1, 2025 this newly enacted law creates an affirmative defense/cause of action for defendants in medical debt lawsuits. If the provider was not in compliance with the pricing transparency requirements on the date of service, they may not initiate or continue debt collection efforts.

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Almost **one in four Oklahomans** have medical debt and about **25%** of Oklahoma bankruptcies are due to medical debt.

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To learn more about debt in Oklahoma consider: [“The Downward Debt Spiral, A Study of Oklahoma’s Judicial Debt Collection System.”](#)

Medical Debt Default Judgement Checklist

Title 12 O.S. § 193 “Medical Debt Requirements”

In all cases, has the Collector attached the following to the petition?

- A copy of redacted itemization of the charges (basis for the medical debt)
- Proof of compliance with healthcare pricing transparency laws

Prior to default judgment being granted, has the collector provided the Court with all the following evidence?

- The original account number at charge-off
- The original creditor at charge-off
- The amount due at charge-off or, *if the balance has not been charged off, an itemization of the amount claimed to be owed including the principal, interest, fees, and other charges or reductions from payment made or other credits*
- An itemization of post charge-off additions, if any
- The date of the last payment, if applicable, or the date of the last transaction
- Proof of compliance with healthcare pricing transparency laws

NEW Cause of Action for Defendants Facing Medical Debt Collection Actions

63 O.S. 1-725.17

Effective November 1, 2025 a hospital cannot try to collect payment from a patient if they were not following the law on the day they provided services to the patient.

If the hospital was not in compliance with the new laws and is asking a patient to make payments a defendant can:

- File a lawsuit to find out if the hospital was in compliance on the day they received care or services and determine if it will affect your bill.
- The hospital must stop their collection efforts while the case is going on.

If after a hearing, the court or jury finds that the hospital was not following the law, the hospital SHALL:

- Refund the patient any money already paid toward that bill
- Pay the patient a penalty that is equal to the full amount of the bill
- Drop or dismiss any cases against the patient and pay legal fees
- Remove the debt from the patient's credit report

Important note – this law still allows hospitals to:

- Send patients bills, or continue to bill the patient's insurance
- Deny refunds of payments to patients so long as they did not attempt to collect debt in a way that violates this law

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Legal Terms you Might See (and What They Mean)

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