

## **Transparency in THR: Are Hospitals Obeying the Law?**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Pricing information for medical and surgical procedures is now mandated by federal law. This is vital for the proper functioning of an economic ecosystem. Since 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires hospitals to provide a comprehensive chargemaster for various shoppable services in a consumer-friendly format. We aimed to evaluate the levels of price transparency and granularity for self-paying patients seeking total hip arthroplasty (THA) among hospitals in Dade County, South Florida.

### **METHODS:**

All major hospital systems within our county were studied. Data collection was conducted by systematic website searches and phone calls to these institutions. THA price transparency and pricing granularity were evaluated using two scales created to indicate levels of price accessibility and pricing details, respectively. We computed descriptive statistics to characterize our findings and compare non-profit and for-profit institutions.

**RESULTS:** We studied a total of 20 hospital systems. 100% had an available chargemaster or some form of a consumer shopping resource on their websites. Only 4 (20%) hospitals provided an estimate for total cost (mean = \$42,990) of THA, and 11 (55%) provided the hospital cost (mean = \$45,038). Two hospitals (10%) reported surgeon cost, and none reported anesthesia costs. Among the for-profit hospitals 78% had the highest level of price transparency, but they all (100%) had the lowest level of granularity. Among non-profit hospitals (n=11), 82% had the highest level of transparency, but a similar majority (82%) had the lowest level of granularity.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:** Transparency and ease of use were extremely variable. The prices provided did not include surgeon, anesthesia, radiology, pathology, and hospitalists in any of the institutions. There was a marked lack of granularity in the available pricing information for this widely performed surgical procedure. It is extremely difficult in 2025 for someone wanting to find out how much hip replacement costs. Price transparency is essential for an economic ecosystem to work properly.