

# **Why You Must Have Someone in Your Office Who Can Discuss the Patient's Account (with the Patient)**



**I recently had an experience at my doctor's office where I had a problem with my account.**

Actually, I had been questioning why I hadn't gotten a refund for 2 months but was told both times I was in the office by the receptionist that she would "send a message to the biller to correct this."

When I arrived at the doctor's office this time, I asked about the \$50 credit that I was owed and was told by the receptionist she would again "send a message to the biller."

**I lost my cool!**

Please understand, it takes a lot for me to lose my cool. It especially takes a lot for me to lose it in a doctor's office, as I feel I intimately understand the inner workings of practices, especially the challenges practice face.

1. First I asked if the receptionist could explain the

problem to me. She couldn't.

2. Next I asked if I could speak to the biller. This office's biller works off site, and when I asked if I could speak with her, the receptionist stated "We don't know when she is near the phone." I was given the biller's phone number to call her.
3. Finally, I asked for a copy of my account to review. The receptionist wasn't sure if she could print a copy, but she said she would try, and if she could, she would have it for me when I had completed my appointment. **In the meantime, she asked me for my co-pay.**

## **So what advice do I, as a patient, have to give to medical offices?**

1. If your billing staff is offsite, educate onsite staff to answer 80% of patient questions. Some questions need a specialized person to answer, but the majority are straightforward. Your receptionist should not have that deer-in-the-headlights look when a question about a bill is posed.
2. Connect patients who have questions to your offsite billing staff while the patient is in your office. Don't let the patient leave the office feeling that their concern has not been addressed.
3. If you are asking your patients to pay at time of service, you need to refund their over-payments with as much speed as you collected their money. Would I leave my physician over \$50? I might.