

Revision Of Hospital And Polyclinic Fees

Healthcare Financing

26 Dec 1997

Ministry of Health will revise the following fees with effect from 2 Jan 98.

Polyclinic attendance, laboratory investigation and antenatal fees; and HIV screening fees for pregnant women Woodbridge Hospital/ Institute of Mental Health daily ward and SOC consultation fees Alexandra Hospital laboratory, x-ray, specialised investigation and surgical operation fees

Polyclinics

The present attendance fee of \$7 will be increased by \$1. The attendance fee has not been revised since Jun 1993. Senior citizens aged 65 years and above, children under 18 years old who are not working, and students in schools and junior colleges will continue to enjoy a 50% concession on their attendance fee. Hence, they will only need to pay 50 cents more.

The maximum amount payable for laboratory investigations ceiling of will be raised from \$7 to \$8. This increase will affect only a small group of patients who need to go for laboratory tests. patients attending polyclinics.

Women are not required to pay antenatal fees when they are expecting their first, second or third child. Only those women who are expecting their fourth or higher order child need to pay antenatal fees. At present they pay \$7. This will be increased by \$1.

Presently, HIV screening is available for pregnant women who opt for it at a cost of \$10. To encourage more pregnant women to opt for HIV screening, the charges will be reduced by 50% to \$5.

Woodbridge Hospital/ Institute of Mental Health (WH/IMH)

The Specialist Outpatient Clinic (SOC) consultation fees for both first and repeat visits for private patients will be increased by \$5 and for subsidised patients by \$3. These fees have not been revised since Jun 1992 and Jun 1993 respectively.

The daily ward fees will be increased by between \$1 (for Class C) and \$14 (for Class A1).

Alexandra Hospital (AH)

8 Surgical operation, laboratory, x-ray and specialised investigation fees for Class A and B1 patients will be increased by 3%. from \$160 to \$5,800 for Class A patients and \$136 to \$4,930 for Class B1 patients. Current Laboratory, X-ray and Specialised Investigations fees range from \$6 to \$1,600 for Class A patients and \$6 to \$1,360 for Class B1 patients. Subsidised patients will not be affected by this fee revision.

Surgical Operations fees were last revised in Aug 1995 while Laboratory, X-ray and Specialised Investigations in Jun 1993.

Rationale for the fee revision

Regular fee increases are necessary to keep up with rising costs and to maintain medical standards. Since 1995, the operating expenditure of AH, WH/IMH and the polyclinics has increased by an average of 16%. 40% However, the fee increases are kept low to ensure that the charges remain affordable to the public. In addition, not all fees have been increased. For example, only four types of fees (namely laboratory, x-ray, specialised investigation and surgical operation fees) in AH will go up. The remaining 16 fee types will be unchanged.

Despite the fee increase, the polyclinic and hospital fees for class B2 and C patients, continue to be heavily subsidised by the Government. Those who are unable to pay even these subsidised fees can approach the hospital or polyclinic authorities for assistance. The Ministry will grant

Medifund assistance or remission of fees to those who are genuinely poor and indigent. No Singaporean will be denied basic medical treatment because of inability to pay.

HIV Screening for Pregnant Women at Polyclinics

At present, pregnant women going for antenatal checkups at polyclinics are not routinely requested to have HIV screening.

Studies have shown that about 1 in 3 babies born to HIV-infected mothers will become infected. Since 1994, clinical studies in the US have shown that early detection and treatment of HIV-infected mothers can significantly reduce this risk to about 1 in 12 babies being infected. In view of this, pregnant women will be offered HIV screening when they go for their antenatal checkups. This will be an optional test and will only be done with the consent of the patient. However, to encourage more pregnant women to opt for HIV screening, the Ministry has decided to reduce the HIV screening fees for them by 50% from \$10 to \$5.

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