

Hospital to require credit card or cash deposit for some services

Starting Tuesday, Aug. 1, patients at Markham Stouffville Hospital are going to need their credit card.

The hospital will require credit card information (or a deposit) for all inpatient admissions to guarantee payment for certain

uninsured services that have been requested by patients and are not covered by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

This new payment option also offers patients the convenience of an express discharge service, allowing them to authorize that

their account balance be charged direct to their credit card upon discharge from hospital.

Patients will not be billed for health services covered by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Uninsured services refer to dis-

cretionary services that patients choose to obtain from the hospital such as: preferred accommodation (semi-private or private); telephone and television; ambulance; various equipment (i.e. specialized casts, braces, crutches); and proce-

dures or services that have been delisted by the Ministry of Health.

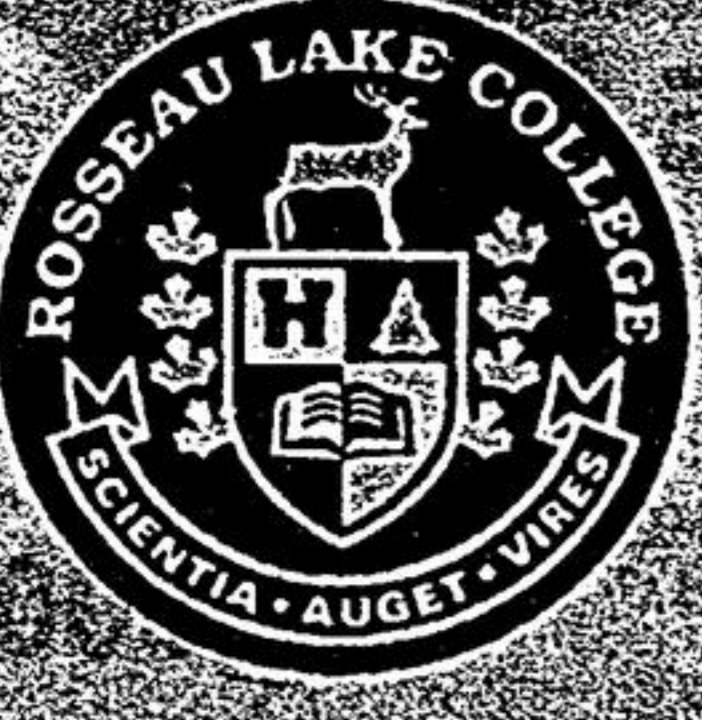
For patients with proof of valid supplemental health insurance coverage, the hospital will continue to bill the insurer for preferred accommodation charges covered by their plan.

If patients do not wish to settle their account by credit card, they continue to have the option of having a statement sent to them. Payment by cheque may be forwarded by mail or their account can be settled in cash or by cheque with the cashier's office. Once payment is received, their credit card imprint will be destroyed. No credit charges will be processed without advance notification to the card owner.

The inability to provide credit card information does not affect a patient's access to health services at the hospital. For patients who do not wish to provide credit card information at the time of admission, but are requesting preferred accommodation, telephone or television service, a minimum three-day deposit (by cash or cheque) will be collected to cover these uninsured charges.

"Introducing the collection of credit card information and advance deposits offers our patients an easy, convenient way to settle their account with us," says Marilyn Bruner, hospital president and CEO, "while enabling us to reduce costs associated with the billing and collection of patient accounts. Markham Stouffville Hospital is always looking for more cost-effective ways to provide service. These improvements to our billing system, along with the new express discharge option for patients, will result in cash management savings that can be redirected to patient care."

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