



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor
Department of Health and Human Services
825 L Street Anchorage, AK 99501



April 14, 2017

Dear Health Care Practitioners and Operators of Health Care Facilities in the Municipality of Anchorage:

Thank you for the tremendous work you do in our community. This letter is to inform you of AO 2017-26, a new ordinance passed on February 28, 2017 by the Anchorage Assembly which helps create transparency between a practitioner or facility providing services and patients receiving health care in the Municipality of Anchorage. AO 2017-26 requires health care practitioners and facilities to provide cost estimates to patients who request such information. Upon request by a patient, and within 10 business days from receiving the request, AO 2017-26 requires health care practitioners and facilities, to provide a written or electronic estimate of reasonably anticipated health care charges to treat the patient's condition when receiving nonemergency medical services. In addition, the ordinance requires health care practitioners and facilities to conspicuously post a sign in patient waiting areas with specific language regarding requesting cost estimates.

AO 2017-26 was developed to assist consumers to make informed decisions related to the cost of nonemergency health care services. As a health care practitioner or the operator of a health care facility in Anchorage, you recognize the importance of educating patients regarding their health care. Providing patients with cost estimates contributes to a stronger health care partnership. AO 2017-26 requires you to display a health care transparency sign in a location that is clearly visible to your patients. The sign must be displayed by April 29, 2017. The sign will be available for download on our webpage www.muni.org/coho. If you would like to draft your own version it must include: "You will be provided with an estimate of the anticipated charges of your care, upon request. Please do not hesitate to ask for information. Anchorage Municipal Code 16.130.010."

The fine for failing to provide a patient with a written or electronic cost estimate within 10 business days of the request or failing to post the sign by April 29, 2017 is \$100/day until provided/posted, not to exceed \$1,000. Please note that municipal enforcement officers work to resolve violations without fines whenever possible. The ability to correct a violation is usually provided before a fine is issued. The ordinance will be law as of April 29, 2017, however, the Municipality of Anchorage will not begin actively enforcing the ordinance prior to September 1, 2017. This allows practitioners and facilities time to implement the requirements of the ordinance.

To read the full ordinance and the Frequently Asked Questions information, please access our website at www.muni.org/coho. If you have questions regarding AO 2017-26, As Amended, and this posting requirement, you may contact 343-4260 for further information.

Regards,

Michael K. Abbott
Municipal Manager