

SA-VIT COLLECTION AGENCY TIPS OF THE MONTH ARCHIVES



October 2009

Collecting from Estates

When a patient dies and there is an unpaid private pay balance, the payment records should be changed to "The estate of" and the patient's name. Initially the follow-up bills can be sent to the current address. If there is a living spouse then the bills should be addressed to him or her with the notation "For the Estate of."

If there is no spouse and there is a will, the surrogate's office in the county where the deceased lived can be contacted by mail. Include with the request the name and address of the patient, along with a fee of \$10. That office will search the records and send you the name and address of the executor. Then file your claim with both the surrogate and the executor.

However, if there is no will but there are assets in the estate, an administrator will be appointed as the fiduciary who then will be responsible for the payment of outstanding debts.

The process of getting paid can take between six months to a year or more depending upon the complexity of the estate. However, once your charges are recorded with the surrogate and the executor or administrator you will be paid, provided there are sufficient funds in the estate.

Practices that deal with end-of-life treatment should establish a working relationship with the surrogates' offices in the counties where most of their patients reside.