



# Medical Debt & Collections Addendum *Ascension Health System*

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## About ABC for Health:

ABC for Health is a Wisconsin based nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services.

ABC for Health's mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services, and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage services.

## Extending Our Research:

In a continuation of our previous medical debt and collections research,<sup>1</sup> ABC for Health conducted a comprehensive review of circuit court records to compile data on medical debt lawsuits filed by the Ascension Health System in Wisconsin from January 2020– November 10, 2021 (the drafting of this report). The goal of this research was to gain insight into the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on medical debt collection.



## Our Findings:

**Ascension filed no new collections actions against patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- As part of our prior research,<sup>1</sup> from 2017 through 2019, Ascension (and its component hospitals) filed **131** lawsuits against patients.
- From January 2020– November 10, 2021, Ascension filed **0** new collections lawsuits against patients.

## Future Practices:

What Ascension's post-pandemic practices will be are of course unknown. As of the drafting of this update (11/10/21), Ascension has not initiated any new collections actions against patients since before the start of the pandemic. We hope that this pattern continues, signaling the end of Ascension's medical debt collection practices against patients.

## Sources:

1. Medical Debt & Collections: A Better Way Forward for Wisconsin, available at: [https://www.safetyweb.org/PDFs/Medical Debt and Collections.pdf](https://www.safetyweb.org/PDFs/Medical%20Debt%20and%20Collections.pdf)