

## LAKESIDE HEALTH CLINIC P.C. BUSINESS OFFICE POLICIES

**SUBJECT:** Sliding Fee Discount Program

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** NOVEMBER 1, 2022

**POLICY:** To make available discount services to those in need.

**PURPOSE:**

This program is designed to provide free or discounted care to those who have no means, or limited means, to pay for their medical services. In addition to quality healthcare, patients are entitled to financial counseling by someone who can understand and offer possible solutions for those who cannot pay in full.

Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services. Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, creed, religion, disability, or national origin. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are used in creating and annually updating the sliding fee schedule (SFS) to determine eligibility.

**PROCEDURE:** The following guidelines are to be followed in providing the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

1. Notification: Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:

Program discounts being revoked and the full balance of the account(s) restored and payable.

If an application is unable to be processed due to the need for additional information, the applicant has two weeks from the date of notification to supply the necessary information without having the date on their application adjusted. If a patient does not provide the requested information within the two-week time period, their application will be re-dated to the date on which they supply the requested information.

7. ELIGIBILITY: Discounts will be based on income and family size only. Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. uses the Census Bureau definitions of each.

a. Family is defined as: a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family.

b. Income includes: earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources. Noncash benefits (such as food stamps and housing subsidies do **not** count.

8. Income verification: Applicants must provide one of the following: prior year W-2, two most recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or a copy of the prior years tax return (if W-2 not filed). Self-employment individuals will be required to submit detail of the most recent three months of income and expenses for the business. Adequate information must be made available to determine eligibility for the program. **Self-declaration of income** may only be used in special circumstances.

Specific examples include participants who are homeless. Patients who are unable to provide written verification must provide a signed statement of income, and why he/she is unable to provide independent verification. Self-declared patients will be responsible for 100% of their charges until management determines the appropriate category.

9. Discounts: Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive a full 100% discount. Those with income above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% of poverty, will be charged according to the attached sliding fee schedule. The sliding fee schedule will be updated during the first quarter of every calendar year with the latest Federal Poverty Guidelines.

10. Nominal fee: Patients receiving a full discount will be assessed a \$10.00 nominal charge per visit. However, patients will not be denied services due to an inability to pay. The nominal fee is not a threshold for receiving care and thus, is not a minimum fee or co-payment.

11. Waiving of Charges: In certain situations, patients may not be able to pay the nominal or discount fee. Waving of charges may only be used in special circumstances and must be approved by Lakeside Health Clinic P.C.'s management. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's file along with an explanation (e.g., ability to pay, good will, health promotion event).

12. Applicant notification: The Sliding Fee Discount Program determination will be provided to the applicant(s) in writing and will include the percentage of Sliding Fee Discount Program write off, or, if applicable, the reason for denial. If the application is approved for less than 100% discount or denied, the patient and/or responsible party must immediately establish payment arrangements with Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. Sliding Fee Discount Program applicants are eligible for a period of 12 months. The applicant has the option to reapply after the

12 months have expired or anytime there has been a significant change in family income. When the applicant reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of six months or the expiration of their last Sliding Fee Discount Program application.

13. Refusal to Pay: If a patient verbally expresses an unwillingness to pay or vacates the premises without paying for services, the patient will be contacted in writing regarding their payment obligations. If the patient is not on the sliding fee schedule, a copy of the sliding fee discount program application will be sent with the notice. If the patient does not make effort to pay or fails to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time, Lakeside Health Clinic P.C. can explore options not limited, but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring the patient to collections efforts.

14. Record Keeping: Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decisions will be maintained and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Business Office Manager's Office, in effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.