

CORPORATE POLICY

SUBJECT: Hardship Fee Reduction for Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health Services

CATEGORY: Finance

ORIGINAL DATE: January 1, 1998

REVIEWED DATE: June 5, 2018

REVISION DATE: April 15, 2020

I. POLICY:

The Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center (LCHD/CHC) will not deny anyone access to care due to inability to pay and offers a sliding fee adjustment to the amount a client/patient is billed for services. It is intended to reflect what individuals should reasonably spend on LCHD/CHC services. Predetermined amounts do not consider all financial circumstances clients/patients face and for this reason the LCHD/CHC maintains an option of adjusting, removing, or maintaining fees for individuals. The LCHD/CHC offers clients/patients a payment plan option prior to considering any fee adjustment, but clients/patients with extraordinary circumstances can request and complete the Financial Hardship Application form for consideration of a fee reduction.

II. SCOPE:

All LCHD/CHC Business Office, Central Billing, and Finance Office staff and management.

III. PROCEDURE:

- A. This establishes the protocol for client/patient fee review and/or reduction. Clients/patients may complete the Financial Hardship Application form explaining the extraordinary expenses they face that may place them in a different situation than others of similar income and family size. A client/patient may initiate this request at any time during treatment or visit.
- B. Client/Patient initiates the request for fee reduction by completing the Financial Hardship Application form. Business Office staff must then verify the information provided on that form before completing the recommended Hardship Waiver and entering comments. Those comments should address the relative merit of the request.
- C. If there is a past due balance on the account, the client/patient is requested to sign up for a budget payment plan.
- D. After Business Office staff determines the Financial Hardship Application form meets the requirements for an adjustment, it is sent to the Finance Department where it must receive approval from either the Director of Finance or the Finance and Billing Manager. Upon their approval, the document is sent to the Patient Accounts Supervisor where the appropriate adjustments are made on the client's/patient's account.
- E. In cases of public health outbreaks or to abide by public health grant or CDC direction, the Director of Prevention or the Executive Director can approve waiving of fees to protect the health of the public.
- F. The Finance and Billing Manager has the authority to approve hardship discounts up to 10% of the outstanding client/patient account balances.

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- G. Hardship discounts greater than 10% but less than 25% must be approved by the Director of Finance. Discounts of 25% or more must be approved by the Executive Director via the Director of Finance.

IV. REFERENCES:

Billing and Collection for Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health Services Policy; Charge Corrections, Write Offs, and Encounter Adjustments to the Practice Management System Policy; HRSA PIN 2014-02

V. AUTHORS/REVIEWERS:

Finance and Business Office Management, Corporate Policy and Procedure Committee, Executive Team, Executive Committees of the Board of Health and Governing Council.

VI. APPROVALS:

Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center Executive Director

Signature: _____



Date: _____

MAY 5, 2020