

SUBJECT: **Sliding Fee Program**

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2019

POLICY: To make available affordable 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 mental health/AODA 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 or find reasonable payment alternatives.

Clark County Community Services will offer a Sliding Fee Program to all County residents who are unable to pay for their services. Clark County Community Services will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity creed, religion, disability, or national origin. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are used in creating and annually updating the sliding fee schedule to determine eligibility.

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

1. **Notification:** Clark County Community Services will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Program by:
 - Agency Brochure explaining the fee system will be available to all uninsured patients at the time of service.
 - Notification of the Sliding Fee Program will be offered to each patient upon admission.
 - Sliding Fee Program application will be included with overdue bills and collection notices sent out.
 - An explanation of our Sliding Fee Program is available on the Clark County Community Services website.
 - Clark County Community Services places notification of Sliding Fee Program in the clinic waiting area.
2. All patients seeking healthcare services at Clark County Community Services are assured that they will be served regardless of ability to pay. **No one is refused service because of lack of financial means to pay.**
3. **Request for discount:** Requests for discounted services may be made by patients, family members, social services staff or others who are aware of existing financial hardship. The Sliding Fee Program will only be made available for clinic visits. Information and forms can be obtained from the clinic staff.
4. **Administration:** The Sliding Fee Program procedure will be administered through the Account Technician or his/her designee. Information about the Sliding Fee Program policy and procedure will be provided and assistance offered for completion of the application.

Dignity and confidentiality will be respected for all who seek and/or are provided charitable services.

5. **Alternative payment sources:** All alternative payment resources must be exhausted, including all third-party payment from insurance(s), federal and state programs.
6. **Completion of Application:** The patient/responsible party must complete the Sliding Fee Program application in its entirety. By signing the Sliding Fee Program application, persons authorize Clark County Community Services access in confirming income as disclosed on the application form. Providing false information on a Sliding Fee Program application will result in all Sliding Fee Program discounts being revoked and the full balance of the account(s) restored and payable immediately.

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. Any accounts turned over for collection as a result of the patient's delay in providing information will not be considered for the Sliding Fee Program.

7. **Eligibility:** Discounts will be based on income and family size only. Clark County Community Services 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. *Non-cash 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 Form 4506-T (if W-2 not filed). Self-employed 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 (s)he is unable to provide independent verification. This statement will be presented to Clark County Community Services Director or his/her designee for review and final determination as to the sliding fee percentage. 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 incomes 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 \$20 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. Waiving of charges may only be used in special circumstances and must be approved by Clark County Community Services Director, or their designee. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's file along with an explanation.
12. **Applicant notification:** The Sliding Fee Program determination will be provided to the applicant(s) in writing, and will include the percentage of Sliding Fee Program write off, or, if applicable, the reason for denial. If the application is approved for less than a 100% discount or denied, the patient and/or responsible party must immediately establish payment arrangements with Clark County Community Services.
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, Clark County Community Services can explore options not limited, but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring the patient collections efforts.
14. **Record keeping:** Information related to Sliding Fee Program decisions will be maintained and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Account Technician's Office, in an effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.
 - a. Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Program will be logged in a password protected document on Clark County Community Services shared directory, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage and percentage of coverage.
 - b. The Account Technician will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee Program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials will also be logged.
15. **Policy and procedure review:** Annually, the amount of Sliding Fee Program provided will be reviewed by the Director. The SFS will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines.

ATTACHMENTS:

2019 Sliding Fee Schedule

Patient Application for the Sliding Fee Program

APPROVAL: 08/28/2015

REVISED: 04/01/2019

REVIEWED BY: Sue Voigt, Director