



Seattle Children's[®]
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Patient Rights and Responsibilities, 10793

Policy/Procedure

PURPOSE:

Outline the objectives of, and communication process for, notifying patients and their families and/or representatives of their rights and responsibilities.

POLICY:

Seattle Children's assists patients and their families/representatives in understanding and exercising their rights and responsibilities in the care delivery process. Patient safety is enhanced when patients and their families/representatives are partners in the health care process and have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

PROCEDURE:

- I. The "Rights and Responsibilities" brochure delineates for patients and their families/representatives their rights and responsibilities as provided by state and federal law, as well as any additional rights provided by and responsibilities imposed by Seattle Children's Hospital. Those rights and responsibilities are, by this reference, incorporated into this policy and procedure.
- II. Patient Access to Notice of Rights and Responsibilities
 - A. Whenever possible, patients and/or their families/representatives must be provided notice of rights prior to the delivery, or discontinuation, of care.
 1. Admission Services Coordinators or Registration Coordinators will:
 - i. Offer each patient and/or patient's family/representative a copy of the "Rights and Responsibilities" brochure at the time of obtaining consent during admission or registration (see **Administrative P&P**, [Consent for Care and Treatment \(10288\)](#)), and
 - ii. Document in the electronic health record every time the Admission Services Coordinator or Registration Coordinator offered the brochure and whether the patient and/or family/representative accepted it.

2. Services and programs may provide additional rights and impose additional responsibilities, communicating them with patients and/or their families/representatives at the point of care. These additional rights and responsibilities may derive from federal and/or state regulations and/or organizational and patient safety needs, as agreed upon by appropriate organizational leadership.
- B. The "[Rights and Responsibilities](#)" brochure is available to print or order from the Patient Education Database on CHILD. For database access or ordering help, contact the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.
- C. "Rights and Responsibilities" brochures are displayed near patient registration areas and the Family Resource Center.
- D. "Rights and Responsibilities" signs are displayed at main patient entrances.

III. Patient Understanding of Rights and Responsibilities

- A. The communication of rights and responsibilities needs to be provided to patients or their families/representatives in a manner that meets their needs for understanding.
- B. If a patient or their family/representative has alternative communication needs, interpretation and translation services must be provided in accordance with the **Clinical P&P**, [Interpreter and Translation Services \(10585\)](#).
- C. Staff should offer to answer questions about rights and responsibilities and, when they are uncertain of how to answer, escalate questions to local leadership and inform the patient and/or family/representative of that action. If staff need additional information about how to address questions, they can contact Patient and Family Relations at 206-987-2550 (between 8 am and 3:30 pm, Sunday-Friday) or consult **Clinical P&P**, [Escalation Protocol for Patient Care, Safety Concerns, or Off-Policy Requests \(10219\)](#).

Additional Resources:

- Administrative P&P, [Partnership Plan, 11695](#)

REFERENCES:

CMS Hospital Conditions of Participation: Patient Rights, A-0115 – 0217, Rev. 200 (February 2020).

Condition of participation: Patient's rights, 42 CFR 482.13.

Patient Rights, PR.1 – PR.8, Interpretive Guidelines and Surveyor Guidance. National Integrated Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (DNV-GL NIAHO), Rev. 20-0 (September 2020).

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, Age, or Disability in Health Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance, 45 CFR 92.

Washington Administrative Code 246-320-141 (2009).

REVIEWED BY:

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Attachments

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Approval Signatures

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	Russell Williams: Sr. Vice President & COO	11/13/2020
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Financial Assistance, 10226

Policy/Procedure

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline Seattle Children's policy and procedures with respect to the provision of Financial Assistance (also known as "charity care") to eligible patients consistent with federal and state law.

POLICY:

In furtherance of its charitable mission of Hope, Care, Cure, Seattle Children's offers Financial Assistance to eligible patients and families within our service area in accordance with this Policy. In addition to caring for patients from our primary service area (Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho), Seattle Children's provides unique services to patients who reside throughout the United States.

Financial Assistance is provided for emergency and Medically Necessary Care to patients based upon family need and the criteria set forth in this Policy. Seattle Children's has established criteria for providing Financial Assistance in accordance with applicable law, including the requirements of Chapter 246-453 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), Chapter 70.170.060 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), and § 501(r) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) and its implementing regulations.

Eligibility decisions for Financial Assistance are made without regard to race, color, religion (creed), sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin (ancestry), disability, age, genetic information, marital status, citizenship, pregnancy or maternity, protected veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable national, federal, state, or local law.

Seattle Children's complies with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) and its implementing regulations, providing appropriate medical screening examination and stabilizing treatment for emergency medical conditions, regardless of an individual's ability to pay.

DEFINITIONS:

Amounts Generally Billed (AGB): Patients who are eligible for Financial Assistance under this Policy will not be charged more for emergency or other Medically Necessary Care than the "amounts generally billed" (AGB)

to patients who have health insurance covering such care by using the look-back method described in the IRC § 501(r) regulations. Seattle Children's determines AGB by multiplying the hospital's gross charges for any emergency or Medically Necessary Care by a percentage which is based on claims allowed under Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurers during the last complete hospital fiscal year.

Information on Seattle Children's AGB percentage and how it is calculated can be obtained at <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/>.

Medically Necessary Care: Medically necessary hospital or clinic health care services that are reasonably calculated to diagnosis, correct, cure, alleviate, or prevent the worsening of conditions that endanger life, or cause suffering or pain, or result in illness or infirmity, or threaten to cause or aggravate a handicap, or cause physical deformity or malfunction, and there is no equally effective more conservative or substantially less costly course of treatment available or suitable for the person requesting the service.

Financial Assistance (Charity Care): Emergency and Medically Necessary Care rendered to indigent persons for no fee or a discounted fee when Third-Party Coverage, if any, has been exhausted, to the extent that the persons are unable to pay for the care or to pay deductibles or co-insurance amounts required by a third-party payer.

Resident: An individual who (a) lives in a U.S. state for the majority of a calendar year; and (b) intends to continue to live in the same location subsequent to treatment being complete.

Sliding Scale Discount Schedule: A Seattle Children's-determined, publicly available schedule of discounts to charges for patients/families deemed eligible for Sliding Scale Financial Assistance under this Policy. **See** Section III.B.2. for detailed information on Seattle Children's Sliding Scale discounts.

Third-Party Coverage: An obligation on the part of an insurance company, health care service contractor, health maintenance organization, group health plan, government program, tribal health benefits, or health care sharing ministry as defined in 26 U.S.C. Sec. 5000A to pay for the care of covered patients and services, and may include settlements, judgments, or awards actually received related to the negligent acts of others which have resulted in the medical condition for which the patient has received hospital health care service.

PROCEDURE:

Access to Emergency Services

- A. Access to a medical screening examination and appropriate stabilizing treatment will not be delayed or denied based on an individual's ability to pay for services or determination of an individual's insurance coverage or Financial Assistance eligibility.

Scope of Financial Assistance

- A. **Operations:** For purposes of this policy, Financial Assistance means Seattle Children's giving an eligible patient/family a full or partial write-off of any patient balance remaining after applicable Third Party Coverage has been exhausted. Financial Counselors can also provide estimates upon request, assistance with Medicaid and Qualified Health Plan (QHP) applications, and creation of interest-free payment plans. Financial Counselors can be reached at (206) 987-3333 or by email at FinancialCounselor@seattlechildrens.org.
- B. **Charges Financial Assistance Covers and Does Not Cover:** Financial assistance will be applied to charges for emergency and Medically Necessary Care.

1. Charges for services that are cosmetic, elective, or primarily for the convenience of the patient are not eligible for Financial Assistance. See <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/> for a list of services that are not eligible for Financial Assistance.
2. Services that (a) can be provided by an alternate provider within a patient's insurance network; and (b) have not been approved by that insurance to be provided in network at Seattle Children's are not eligible for Financial Assistance.
3. Charges for services that are not reimbursable through a patient's Third-Party Coverage because Third-Party Coverage procedural or clinical requirements were not followed are not eligible for Financial Assistance.

C. Which providers Financial Assistance Covers:

1. Covered Providers:

- a. Financial Assistance applies to inpatient and outpatient facility and professional charges, as applicable, for services provided at Seattle Children's hospital and clinics or at other community hospitals and sites, by providers employed by or under contract with Seattle Children's or Children's University Medical Group.
- b. All eligible services provided by Seattle Children's providers at Garfield High School Teen Clinic (based on the presumed income of minors consenting to their own care).

- 2. Non-covered providers:** Some community physicians or similarly credentialed medical providers who see patients at Seattle Children's bill separately for their professional charges. Those community providers may choose whether to grant financial assistance for their bills commensurate with Seattle Children's Financial Assistance Policy or may apply a different financial assistance policy. See Seattle Children's website at <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/> or call (206) 987-3333 for a list of those community providers who do not follow Seattle Children's Financial Assistance Policy.

- D. Duration** – Financial assistance is typically granted in six-month increments. Financial Assistance granted for an emergency course of care, or resulting from an administrative or presumptive approval, will be approved only for that episode of care. Patients or responsible parties can reapply for Financial Assistance at any time.

Eligibility Criteria for Financial Assistance

- A. Patients must meet all the following criteria in order to be eligible for Financial Assistance:**

- 1. Residency** – Patient must be a Resident (as defined above) of Washington, Alaska, Montana, or Idaho, or a US Resident and have been financially cleared for unique services to proceed under Seattle Children's Out of Region Financial Clearance process.
 - a. **Exception:** Seattle Children's may grant limited- duration Financial Assistance to any patient who meets the income requirements below and receives emergency or urgent care services for an unanticipated, emergency condition or onset of illness, regardless of Residency.
- 2. Income** –
 - a. **Full Financial Assistance:** Patients may be eligible for full Financial Assistance if the patient or responsible party has a gross family income at or below 400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, as adjusted for family size.
 - b. **Sliding Scale Financial Assistance:** Patients may be eligible for Sliding Scale Financial

Assistance if the patient or responsible party has a gross family income between 401% and 599% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, as adjusted for family size. In this case, the patient or responsible party is responsible for the applicable portion of the outstanding amount owed, and Seattle Children's Financial Assistance covers the remaining account balance. Information on Seattle Children's Sliding Scale discounts is available at <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/> or by emailing FinancialCounselor@seattlechildrens.org or calling (206) 987-3333. In cases where a patient or responsible party would qualify for an uninsured discount and also qualifies for Sliding Scale Financial Assistance, the responsible party will receive only the Sliding Scale Financial Assistance discount, which is the most generous discount. Multiple discounts are not applied to the same account.

- c. **Timing of Income Determination:** Income documented at the time clinical services were provided will be used for making Financial Assistance determinations. **Exception:** If income documented at the time of application would result in the family being approved rather than denied Financial Assistance, that lower income will be used.
- d. **Adjustments to Income:** For purposes of determining income levels for Full and Sliding Scale Financial Assistance, if a patient or responsible party is self-employed, the net (take home) income information is used. Seattle Children's will deduct from the income calculation the amount that a family personally pays toward medical insurance premiums for coverage of their beneficiaries who are under the age 26. Income documentation to verify information indicated on the application form may be requested, including but not limited to pay stubs, accounting records and/or income tax returns.

- e. **Family Size:** In Washington State, a family is defined by state law as two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption who live together (WAC 246-453-010(18)). However, Seattle Children's provides care to patients who are part of diverse family structures which do not always align with the strict WAC definition of family. Therefore, to create the opportunity for a more generous financial assistance discount, Seattle Children's may consider all adults and children physically living in the same home as the patient as part of one household for purposes of determining family size and income level for Financial Assistance eligibility.

Dependents physically living outside of the home (e.g., students at college) can be included as a member of the household with verification that such dependent is claimed on the federal income tax return of another identified member of the household. Patients 18 years and older are considered a separate household for purposes of Financial Assistance eligibility when living independently (i.e., outside of the home of their parents or legal guardians) and no other person can claim the patient as a dependent on their federal income tax return.

3. Alternate Sources of Funding –

- a. **Third Party Sources:** Seattle Children's Financial Assistance is a secondary funding source after all other Third Party Coverage (as defined above) and other funding sources have been exhausted, including but not limited to, group or individual health insurance, eligible government programs including Medicaid, third party liability or workers' compensation programs, health care sharing ministry plans, designated grant or trust funds, or any other persons or entities with a responsibility to pay for medical services.
- b. **Where Medicaid Application Required:** Patients with no Third Party Coverage or other source of funding, including those who (a) are uninsured; (b) do not have insurance coverage for the

services provided or to be provided; or (c) have insurance coverage with significantly limited benefits based on the assessment by Seattle Children's, will be required to apply for Medicaid before Financial Assistance is granted. Patients who have enrolled in a health care sharing ministry for health care expenses are considered to be uninsured for purposes of this determination.

- i. A patient may choose to purchase a Qualified Health Plan (QHP), if applicable, in lieu of enrolling in Medicaid. Seattle Children's Financial Counselors are available to assist families with the Medicaid application process or with a QHP application.
- ii. Seattle Children's Financial Counselors may waive the Medicaid application requirement if a Financial Counselor determines during the screening process that a patient would not be eligible for Medicaid. Seattle Children's reserves the right to require written confirmation that a patient is ineligible for alternate funding sources in determining whether to waive the Medicaid application requirement.
- iii. If a patient/family has a philosophical, religious, or other personal objection to applying for Medicaid, and is between 134% and 599% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, the maximum financial assistance that will be granted is 50% Sliding Scale.

4. **Application** –The patient or their responsible party must submit an application form for Financial Assistance by:

- a. Completing the online form available at www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/; or
- b. Printing a paper form from this same website and mailing or faxing it as instructed on such form; or
- c. Completing a paper application, which can be picked up from any Seattle Children's registration desk or obtained by mail from a financial counselor, and mailing or faxing it as instructed in such application packet.

Financial Assistance applications can be submitted prior to the provision of services, during the course of care, or after services have been provided.

5. **Presumptive Eligibility** - In cases where a patient can be reasonably presumed to qualify for Financial Assistance, and the standard application processes are not likely to be completed due to socioeconomic or other factors such as homelessness, Seattle Children's Vice President or Senior Director of Revenue Cycle, or their designee, may administratively designate a patient as qualifying for Financial Assistance in the absence of receiving all required information. Seattle Children's may review relevant and publicly available information about a family's financial situation, other than their credit report, in cases when the family is unresponsive to a bill for an outstanding balance and may grant presumptive Financial Assistance for that outstanding balance eligibility based on this information. All presumptively granted Financial Assistance will only apply to balances already owed.

Financial Assistance Determination Process

A. **Documentation** – All information relating to a patient's Financial Assistance application will be kept confidential. Determination of eligibility will be made by Seattle Children's within fourteen (14) days of receipt of all required information. Seattle Children's will not initiate extraordinary collection efforts while in the process of reviewing the application.

1. **Approvals** – A letter communicating an approval of Financial Assistance and the applicable eligibility

period will be sent to the applicant.

2. **Pending** – In the event incomplete information is received on the application, or a patient/family has not completed the Medicaid eligibility process when required, the application will be pended and a letter communicating why the application has been pended will be sent to the applicant. If responsive information is not received within fourteen (14) days of such notice, the application may be denied.
3. **Denials** – In the event Seattle Children's determines a patient is not eligible for Financial Assistance, a written denial will be provided to the applicant and will include the reason(s) for denial, the date of the decision, and the instructions for appeal or reconsideration.
4. **Appeals** – The applicant may appeal a denial of eligibility for Financial Assistance within thirty (30) days of the determination by providing additional information about the family's income, size, other financial liabilities, or other pertinent factors to the Senior Director of Revenue Cycle. The Senior Director of Revenue Cycle will review all appeals for final determination. If this final determination affirms the previous denial of Financial Assistance, written notification will be sent to the applicant and the Department of Health in accordance with state law.
5. **Refunds** – In the event that a patient/family or other responsible party makes a payment toward Medically Necessary Care and the patient/family is subsequently found eligible for Financial Assistance, patient payments applied to facility charges in the 90 days preceding the eligibility determination will first be applied to other outstanding balances, and any remaining funds will then be refunded within thirty (30) days.

- B. **Uninsured/Self-Pay Discount.** In the event a patient/family is denied or otherwise determined to be ineligible for either Full or Sliding Fee Financial Assistance and has no Third Party Coverage or other discount, a 25% discount will be applied to the patient's facility and professional charges.

Staff Training

- A. Appropriate staff in roles most likely to engage in discussions with families about Financial Assistance, including all those in registration, admission or revenue cycle roles, must participate in an annual training module regarding Financial Assistance, including how to access language resources to be able to assist families with limited English proficiency or who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Communications to the Public

Information about Seattle Children's Financial Assistance Policy is made publicly available as follows:

- A. **Public Notice** – A notice is displayed in key public areas of the hospital, including primary public registration locations and the Emergency Department, in languages spoken by more than 10% of the population of the hospital service area: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian and Somali. Additionally, Seattle Children's Financial Assistance Policy, a plain language summary of the Financial Assistance Policy, and the Financial Assistance application form in these same languages is on Seattle Children's website at www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/paying-for-care/financial-assistance/.
- B. **MyChart notification** – Notification of the availability of Financial Assistance is included during the electronic patient portal MyChart check-in process.
- C. **Individual Notification** – Seattle Children's will make reasonable effort to both determine the existence of any Third Party Coverage for Medically Necessary Care in full or part, and to assess whether families checking in at Seattle Children's sites of care would like information about or screening for Financial Assistance. Paper copies of the Financial Assistance Policy, Plain Language Summary, and applications

in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian or Somali are available for pick up at registration desks at all Seattle Children's clinics.

- D. **Translation Services** – Notices and written information concerning Financial Assistance may be translated into any other language spoken in the community by contacting Seattle Children's Financial Counselor's at FinancialCounselor@seattlechildrens.org or (206) 987-3333.
- E. **Financial Counselors** – Financial Counselors, who have access to interpreter services for languages other than English, are available in person and by telephone (206-987-3333), to assist with questions concerning Financial Assistance or completion of the application.
- F. **Patient Bills** – Patient bills will include a statement on the first page of the bill in both English and Spanish, or in Somali, Vietnamese, or Russian if that is the family's registered primary language, that communicates the availability of Financial Assistance, whether or not the patient or responsible party has insurance coverage, and the email or phone number to contact for further assistance.

Approved by Washington State Department of Health: 11/15/2021

Attachments

[FinancialAssistanceDOHApproval_2021.pdf](#)

Approval Signatures

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Admission Access to Seattle Children's, 10025

Policy/Procedure

PURPOSE:

To describe our commitment to serve all children in our region seeking our care.

POLICY:

Seattle Children's provides health care appropriate for the special needs of children up to 21 years of age who are residents of Washington, Alaska, Montana, or Idaho, regardless of their ability to pay. Children's **Administrative P&P**, [Financial Assistance](#) provides further details about how this objective is effectively achieved for this patient population. Additionally, the **Administrative P&Ps**, [International Patients \(Patients Living Outside of the United States\)](#), [Financial Clearance for Patients Living in the US Outside of the WAMI Region](#), and [Patient 21 years or Older](#) detail Children's requirements for funding non-emergency care for other patient populations.

Children's complies with Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) regulations which require all patients presenting for care in the Emergency Department (ED) to be medically screened and stabilized, regardless of patient age or residency.

Admission of patients needing medically necessary care occurs without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, consistent with requirements defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

All patients who enter the Children's system are carefully assessed at the time of entry, and appropriately placed in a patient care area that most meets their assessed needs.

REFERENCES:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). (1986). Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act. Retrieved February 5, 2014 from: <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EMTALA/index.html?redirect=/EMTALA/>

US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). Office for Civil Rights. Retrieved February 5, 2014 from:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/index.html>

Washington Administrative Code (WAC). (2013, December 23). WAC 246-320-141, Patient rights and organizational ethics. Retrieved February 5, 2014 from: <http://search.leg.wa.gov/search.aspx#results>

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS). (2010). Chapter 5, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination. Retrieved February 5, 2014 from: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/search/site/nondiscrimination>

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- Dan Tisch, Manager, Registration & Admission Services

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