

Sliding Fee Scale Policy

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Scope

This policy applies to all Rural Health Patient Excellence Representatives, Patient Account Representatives and Patient Services that receive a request from patients regarding Quincy Medical Group Rural Health Sliding Fee Scale.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide essential services to those who have no means, or limited means, to pay for their medical services (uninsured or underinsured); it is also available to patients with a large deductible or copay, or have limited benefits through their plan such as Healthy Women's only coverage. The Patient Excellence Representatives, Patient Accounts Representatives and Patient Services role is to work with the patient and/or guarantor to find reasonable payment alternatives for those who cannot pay in full.

Policy

Quincy Medical Group will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program based on a patient's annual income and family size for all primary care services in the Rural Health clinics. Quincy Medical Group will base program eligibility on a person's a patient's annual income and family size and will not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, creed, religion, disability, or nation 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:** Quincy Medical Group will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:
 - A Sliding Fee Discount Program application will be available to all uninsured patients at the time of service in all rural health offices
 - Quincy Medical Group's website provides a Notice to patients stating we provide a Sliding Fee program for essential services
 - Quincy Medical Group places notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program in the clinic waiting areas

2. **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.

Information and forms can be obtained from any Rural Health clinic front desk, Patient Services or Patient Accounts.

3. **Administration:** The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be processed through Patient Accounts. Patient Excellence Representatives and Patient Services should send any completed applications and associated documentation via internal mail to Patient Accounts. Information about the Sliding Fee Discount 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.
4. **Completion of Application:** The patient/responsible party must complete the Sliding Fee Discount Program application in its entirety. By signing the Sliding Fee Discount Program application, persons authorize Quincy Medical Group access in confirming income as disclosed on the application form. Providing false information on a Sliding Fee Discount Program application will result in all Sliding Fee Discount 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 Discount Program

5. **Eligibility:** Discounts will be based on income and family size only. Quincy Medical Group 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.
6. **Income Verification:** Applicants must provide one of the following:
 - Prior year tax return or four most recent pay stubs
 - Statement from employer as to proof of wages when stubs are not available
 - Statement from unemployment income

- Statement from Social Security Disability
 - Annual w-2 wage statements from all sources
 - Gross income determination from the IRS tax return form
7. **Discounts:** Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive a full 100% discount. Patients qualifying for a full discount will be charged a \$10.00 nominal fee per visit. 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.
8. **Covered services:** The Sliding Fee Discount Program will be applied to primary care services at the rural health clinic location, a select listing of in-office laboratory testing (see below) and the technical component of x-ray charges. All other laboratory tests will be sent to an Outside Reference Laboratory for testing and the Quincy Medical Group's Rural Health Sliding Fee Scale does not apply.
- a. Covered lab tests:
1. Urinalysis
 2. Hemoglobin or Hematocrit
 3. Blood Sugar
 4. Pregnancy Test
 5. Primary culturing for transmittal to a certified laboratory
 6. Strep Test
 7. Venipuncture and Handling Fee

The Sliding Fee Scale policy is also offered in instances when a patient has a large deductible or copay, is underinsured, or has limited benefits through their plan such as Healthy Women's only coverage. The Sliding Fee will be granted until the deductible is met or will apply for copays for the patient.

9. **Non-Covered services:** Physical Therapy, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, and other specialty services are available at some rural health clinic sites. These services are excluded from the Quincy Medical Group Rural Health Sliding Fee Scale. These services are the financial responsibility of the patient.
10. **Nominal Fee:** Patients receiving a full discount will be charged a \$10 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 Quincy Medical Group's CFO, Director of Revenue Cycle, or their designee, per the Discount and Patient Charge Adjustment policy. Any waiving of charges should be documented in Epic along with an explanation (e.g. ability to pay, service recovery, etc.).

12. **Application 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 a 100% discount or denied, the patient and/or responsible party must immediately establish payment arrangements with Quincy Medical Group. Sliding Fee discount will be applied to the patient and/or guarantor balance effective on the application date, as long as all required documentation was included, and for the following 12 months. Patients should make payment arrangements with Patient Services or Patient Accounts for any balances incurred prior to the application date. The applicant has the option to reapply after the 12 months have expired or anytime there has been a significant change in family income.

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 does not make an effort to pay or fails to respond, Quincy Medical Group's payment policy will be followed.

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, in an effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.
 - a. Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be entered into Epic. See Sliding Fee tip sheet for detailed directions.
 - b. A corresponding note will also be entered in the Guarantor Account Note detailing effective date, percentage, and proof of income.

15. **Policy and procedure review:** Annually, the amount of Sliding Fee Discount Program provided will be reviewed by the Director of Revenue Cycle. The SFS will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. Pertinent information comparing amount budgeted and actual community care provided shall serve as a guideline for future planning. This will also serve as a discussion base for reviewing possible changes in our policy and procedures and for examining institutional practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible patients from having access to our community care provisions.

Attachments:

QMG Rural Health Sliding Fee Scale Application
Payment Policy and Agreement
2022 Sliding Fee Schedule
Patient Handout