



Franklin County Hospital Charity Care Standards

Background

Unlike many other large cities, where designated charity care hospitals are established, often supported through local tax levy dollars, Columbus is fortunate that local hospitals have a long-standing commitment to share responsibility for providing care to all members of our community, regardless of their ability to pay. Hospital leaders reaffirmed that commitment in 2007, by adopting a uniform charity care standard, in which they agree to follow the same guidelines when providing free and significantly discounted care to patients.

The standards were amended and adopted by the Central Ohio Hospital Council Board of Directors in December 2014 to reflect the expansion of Medicaid coverage, which was enacted through the federal Affordable Care Act in 2010 and approved by the state legislature in 2013. Central Ohio hospitals believe that health coverage, including having a regular source of care with more appropriate use of health services, results in improved health outcomes. The amended charity care standards are intended to encourage eligible Ohioans to obtain healthcare coverage so that they can live healthier lives and potentially avoid high medical expenses.

Medicaid Eligibility in Ohio

Currently in Ohio, individuals who are eligible for health coverage under the Medicaid program include:

- Children (up to 19 years old), in families earning up to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL)
- Parents and childless adults up to age 64 living at or below 138% FPL
- Pregnant women in families earning up to 200% FPL
- Some adults aged 65 and older and some immigrants.

Franklin County hospitals will require patients who are eligible for coverage under the state Medicaid program to apply for such coverage before accessing hospitals' charity care and financial assistance programs. If after applying, it is determined the patient is not eligible for Medicaid coverage, the following guidelines will apply.



Free Care

Free medically necessary, hospital care for patients with family incomes between 138% and 200% of FPL.

Charity Care

Discounted medically necessary, hospital care for patients with families incomes between 200% and 400% FPL.

Notes:

- Patients who may be eligible for Medicaid coverage but refuse to apply for such coverage will be billed for care provided.
- Regardless of whether the patient applies for Medicaid coverage, actual delivery of care will not be denied.
- Family unit for income calculations is based on state regulations for the Hospital Care Assurance Program (Ohio Administrative Code 5101:3-2-07.17). Income may include assets, if available. Assets may be considered in determination if available.
- Hospital may deny out-of-panel, non-emergency care after patient notification and if they reside in out of system service areas.
- “Untimely” applications may be denied.

Special Circumstances/Hardship Cases/Catastrophic Care

Full or partial discounts are considered on a case-by-case basis when a patient’s unusual financial situation, medical debt or other unusual circumstances prevent him or her from qualifying for charity care programs or applying for public assistance. Financial assistance may be available even for patients who are insured. All patients who may face financial hardships due to hospital care are strongly encouraged to contact the hospital’s patient financial assistance department.

Collection Activity

Hospitals have a rigorous process for due diligence to assure that patients are treated fairly and those who have ability to help pay for care do so. The decision to forward a case for action requires the internal judgment of a designated hospital leader or committee. Legal action may be pursued against patients who have the means to pay but are unwilling (*See “Franklin County Hospital Systems Principles on Patient Financial Assistance, Patient Responsibility and Bill Collections,” adopted by the COHC Board of Directors in October 2009*).

The “Franklin County Hospital Charity Care Standards” are in place in the following hospitals:

Mount Carmel Health System

Mount Carmel East Hospital
Mount Carmel West Hospital
Mount Carmel St. Ann’s Hospital
Mount Carmel New Albany Hospital



Nationwide Children's Hospital

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Ohio State University Hospital

Ohio State University Hospital East

OhioHealth

Doctors Hospital

Dublin Methodist Hospital

Grant Medical Center

Riverside Methodist Hospital

