



**SUBJECT: Sliding Fee Discount Program Policy**

**POLICY NUMBER: 210.01**

**MANUAL: Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers Policy and Procedure Manual**

**PURPOSE:**

A requirement of the Health Center Program is the establishment of a sliding fee discount program that includes a schedule of discounts for services, or sliding fee scale discount schedule and that ensures financial barriers to care are minimized for patients who meet certain eligibility criteria. To describe the application and approval process for utilization of the sliding fee scale for all Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers (HOFHC) services.

**SCOPE:**

This Sliding Fee Discount Program uniformly applies to all patients served by HOFHC.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Annual Income: the total annual income from all members of the household that includes, but is not limited to, wages from employment, self-employment income, veteran's benefits, workers' compensation, income earned on investments, and benefits from social security and other government programs.

Bad Debt: accounts that have been determined to be uncollectible because the patient has been unwilling to pay for their medical care.

Certified Application Counselor (CAC) and Community Health Worker (CHW): HOFHC staff members who are designated to obtain financial information and aid patients.

Family Size: the number of family members making up a household and includes individuals who can be claimed by the guarantor on a Federal or State income tax return. Family members living or not living with the patient but largely supported by the patient's income are also counted to determine family size.

Sliding Fee Scale (SFS): a program intended to assist low-income who do not otherwise have the ability to pay for their health care services. Such assistance should consider each individual's ability to contribute to the cost of his or her care. Consideration is also given to patients who have exhausted their insurance benefits and/or who exceed financial eligibility criteria but face extraordinary medical costs.

**POLICY:**

Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers (HOFHC) in accordance with HRSA guidelines will establish a universally applied and implemented sliding fee discount program that includes a schedule of discounts for services, or sliding fee scale discount schedule, that ensures financial barriers to care are minimized for patients who meet certain eligibility criteria based on annual income and family size. No aspect of the sliding fee scale discount program, including HOFHC's fees, the procedures for assessing patient eligibility, or the procedures for collecting payments, will create barriers to health care services. All services within the approved scope of project for which HOFHC charges patients will be offered on the sliding scale and are available to patients regardless of their ability to pay. HOFHC will establish the necessary supporting procedures for determining sliding fee eligibility and sliding fee discounts.

The Sliding Fee Discount Scale is derived from the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines and updated annually. A nominal charge is established for patients at or below 100% of the FPG and is reviewed annually to determine if it remains appropriate based on the information provided by the patient. The nominal charge will not reflect the cost of the service provided. Partial discounts are provided for individuals and families with incomes above 100% of the FPG and at or below 200% of the FPG. These discounts include at least three discount pay classes and adjust based on gradations in income levels and family size. Employees electing to become patients of HOFHC will be permitted to apply for the sliding fee scale discount, but will not be permitted to input sliding fee discounts for themselves or immediate family members. Health center contracts with other providers for the provision of health services within the HRSA-approved scope of project must include a schedule of rates and method of payment for such services. These organizations will offer sliding fee scales in accordance with HRSA's compliance guidelines.

The Board of Directors permits the CEO or designate to make the appropriate Federal Poverty Guideline changes to the HOFHC sliding fee scale immediately upon release by the Health and Human Services. The changes in the sliding fee scale income levels will be brought to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting for approval. The Board will review whether the nominal fee continues to be nominal from a patient's perspective. This policy will be reviewed annually by HOFHC staff and needed changes will be brought to the board for approval prior to implementation.

**ORIGINAL DATE: 07/12/2018**

**REVIEW DATE: 01/22/2020; 01/21/2021**

**APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY:**



**Chair, Board of Directors**



**Chief Executive Officer**

March 25, 2021

**Date**

March 25, 2021

**Date**