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**Title:** Sliding Fee Discount Program Policy, Application, and Schedule  
**Section:** Administration and Finance

**Policy Number:** 105.19  
**Effective Date:** 6.1.23

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## **Sliding Fee Discount Program Policy**

**POLICY:** To make available free or discounted services to those in need.

**PURPOSE:**

All patients seeking health care services at Bridges Healthcare 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. This program is designed to provide free or discounted care to those who have no means, or limited means, to pay for their medical services (uninsured or underinsured).

Bridges Healthcare Inc. will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services. Bridges Healthcare Inc. will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. 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.

Notification: Bridges Healthcare Inc. will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program and Payment Policy Brochure will be available to all patients at the time of service.

Notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be offered to each patient upon admission. Sliding Fee Discount Program application will be included with collection notices sent out by Bridges Healthcare Inc.

An explanation of our Sliding Fee Discount Program and our application form are available on Bridges Healthcare Inc.'s website.

Bridges Healthcare Inc. places notification of Sliding Fee Discount Program in the clinic waiting area.

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 Discount Program will only be made available for clinic visits. Information and forms can be obtained from the Front Desk and the Business Office.

Administration: The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be administered through the Record Compliance and Billing Coordinator or his/her designee. Information about the Sliding Fee Discount Program policy and procedure will be provided to patients. Staff are to offer assistance for completion of the application. Dignity and confidentiality will be respected for all who seek and/or are provided healthcare services.

Completion of Application: The patient/responsible party must complete the Sliding Fee Discount Program application in its entirety. Staff will be available, as needed, to assist Program patient/responsible party with applications. By signing the Sliding Fee Discount Program application, persons are confirming their income to Bridges Healthcare, Inc. as disclosed on the application form.

Eligibility: Discounts will be based on income and family size only.

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. Bridges Healthcare, Inc. will also accept non-related household members when calculating family size.

Income includes: gross wages; salaries; tips; income from business and self-employment; unemployment compensation; workers' compensation; Social Security; Supplemental Security Income; veterans' payments; survivor benefits; pension or retirement income; interest; dividends; royalties; income from rental properties, estates, and trusts; alimony; child support; assistance from outside the household; and other miscellaneous sources.

Income verification: Applicants may provide one of the following: prior year W-2, two most recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or most recent tax return. 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 be used. Patients who are unable to provide written verification may provide a signed statement of income.

Discounts: Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive full 100% discount for health care services. Those with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% of poverty, will be charged a nominal fee 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 FPL Guidelines.

Nominal Fee: Patients with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% poverty will be charged a nominal fee according to the attached sliding fee schedule and based on their family size and income. 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.

Waiving of Charges: In certain situations, patients may not be able to pay the nominal or discount fee. Waiving of charges must be approved by Bridges Healthcare Inc.'s designated official. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's file along with an explanation.

Applicant 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, Bridges Healthcare Inc. will work with the patient and/or responsible party to

**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 an effort to pay or fails to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time, Bridges Healthcare Inc. can explore options not limited to, but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring the patient to collections.

Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be logged in Bridges Healthcare Inc.'s practice management system, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage and percentage of coverage.

**Policy and procedure review:** The SFS will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. Bridges Healthcare Inc. will also review 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: 2023 Sliding Fee Scale and Patient Application for Sliding Fee Discount Program**

Revised Date:

### Bridges Healthcare, Inc. Sliding Fee Discount Information

It is the policy of Bridges Healthcare Inc. to provide essential services regardless of the patient's ability to pay. Bridges offers discounts based on family size and annual income.

Please complete the following information and return to the front desk, your clinician or the Billing Department to determine if you or members of your family are eligible for a discount. The discount will apply to all services received at this clinic, but not those services from outside, including reference laboratory testing, drugs, or any other services. You must complete this form every 12 months or if your financial situation changes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all household members, including those under age 18.

	Name	Date of Birth
Self		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Source	Self	Other	Total
Gross salaries, wages, tips, etc.			
Unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security income, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income.			
Dividends; royalties; income from rental properties; estate and trusts; alimony; child support; assistance from outside the household; other miscellaneous sources			
TOTAL INCOME			

I certify that the family size and income information shown above is correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### For Office Use Only

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Client ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Discount: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Verification Checklist:

☐ State Issued Driver's License

☐ Utility Bill

☐ Paycheck / Employment Stub

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Sliding Fee Schedule (SFS)

### Maximum Annual Income Amounts for each Sliding Fee Percentage Category (except for 100% discount)

Poverty Level	100%	110%	120%	130%	140%	150%	160%	170%	180%	190%	200%	>200%
Family Size	Discount 100%	Discount 90%	Discount 80%	Discount 70%	Discount 60%	Discount 50%	Discount 40%	Discount 30%	Discount 20%	Discount 15%	Discount 10%	Discount 0%
1	\$13,590	14,949	16,308	17,667	19,026	20,385	21,744	23,103	24,462	25,821	27,180	27,181+
2	\$18,830	20,141	21,972	23,803	25,634	27,465	29,296	31,127	32,958	34,789	36,620	36,621+
3	\$23,030	25,333	27,636	29,939	32,242	34,545	36,848	39,151	41,454	43,757	46,060	46,061+
4	\$27,750	30,525	33,300	36,075	38,850	41,625	44,400	47,175	49,950	52,725	55,500	55,501+
5	\$32,470	35,717	38,964	42,211	45,458	48,705	51,952	55,199	58,446	61,693	64,940	64,941+
6	\$37,190	40,909	44,628	48,347	52,066	55,785	59,504	63,223	66,942	70,661	74,380	74,381+
7	\$41,910	46,101	50,292	54,483	58,674	62,865	67,056	71,247	75,438	79,629	83,820	83,821+
8	\$46,630	51,293	55,956	60,619	65,282	69,945	74,608	79,271	83,934	88,597	93,260	93,261+
For each additional person, add	\$4,720	5,192	5,664	6,136	6,608	7,080	7,552	8,024	8,496	8,968	9,440	9,440

Based on the [2022 Federal Poverty Guidelines \(FPG\)](#) for the 48 continuous states and the District of Columbia. Please note that there are separate guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii, and the thresholds would differ for sites in those two states. Sites in Puerto Rico and other outlying jurisdictions would use the above guidelines.