



# Sliding Scale Fee Discount Policy

**Policy:** To make available free or discounted services to those in need of healthcare

**Purpose:** All patients seeking health care services at VIP Primary Care are assured that they will be served regardless of ability to pay. No one is refused services 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).

VIP Primary Care LLC Clinic will offer sliding fee discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services. VIP Primary Care clinic will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate based on an individual's race, 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.

1. **Notification:** VIP Primary Care will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:
  - Sliding Scale Fee Discount Program will be posted in lobby at the front desk and coded with QR code for any patient to download. A paper copy can be provided as needed.
  - Sliding Scale Fee Discount Program explanation, application, and federal poverty guidelines will be posted on VIP Primary Care's website.
  - Sliding Scale Fee Discount Program explanation, application assistant, and federal poverty guidelines will be offered to all deaf and blind patients. Assistance will be offered by Knoxville School of deaf in sign language by telehealth at time of service. Staff and providers will assist blind patients in completion of all required paperwork at the time of service so as not to delay care.

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. The Sliding fee Discount Program will only be made available for Clinic Visits. Information and forms can be obtained from the Front Desk or VIP Primary Care website.
3. **Administration:** The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be facilitated through Tiffany Wilson Office Manager and/or Carrie Beasley Front Desk Assistant. 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 health care services.
4. **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 patient/responsible party with applications. By signing the Sliding Fee Discount Program application, individuals or families are confirming their income to VIP Primary Care as disclosed on the application form.
5. **Eligibility:** Discounts will be based on income and family size only.
  - 5.1. 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. VIP Primary Care will also accept non-related household members, as a separate SFS applicant.
  - 5.2. Income includes Gross wages; Salaries; Tips; Income from business and self-employment; Unemployment compensation; Workers' compensation; Social Security; Supplemental Security income; Veterans' payments; Survivor payments; 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.
6. **Income verification:** Applicants may provide one of the following: prior year W-2, two most recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or Form 4506-T (if W-2 not filed). Self-employed individuals will be required to submit details 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.

- 7. Discounts:** Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty, will receive a full 100% discount for health care services. Those with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at 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 federal poverty language guidelines.
- 8. Nominal Fee:** Patients with income above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% 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.
- 9. 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 VIP Primary Care's providers. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's electronic medical records with an explanation.
- 10. Applicant Notification:** The Sliding Fee Discount Program determination will be provided to the applicants 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, VIP Primary Care will work with the patient and/or responsible party to establish payment arrangements. Sliding Fee Discount Program applications cover outstanding patient balances for six months prior to application date and any balances incurred within 12 months after approved date unless their financial situation changes significantly. The applicant has the option to reapply after the 12 months have expired or anytime there has been a notable change in family income. When the applicant reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of the six months or the expiration of their last Sliding Fee Discount Program application.
- 11. 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 try to pay or fails to respond within 60 days (about 2 months), this constitutes a refusal to pay. At this point in time, VIP Primary Care can explore options not limited to,

but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving charges, or discharging from clinic.

**12. Record Keeping:** Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decision will be maintained and preserved in the patient's electronic medical record, to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.

12:1 Applicants that have been approved to Sliding Fee Discount Program will be in VIP Primary Care's electronic medical record system, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage and percentage of coverage.

12:2 Tiffany Wilson office manager will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee Discount Program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials and applications not returned will also be logged

**13. Policy and Procedure Review:** The Sliding Scale will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. VIP Primary Care will also review changes in the policy and procedures and review clinic practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible patients from having access to care.

**14. Budget:** During the annual budget process, an estimated amount of Sliding Fee Discount Program service will be placed into the budget as a deduction from revenue.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**2022 SLIDING FEE SCHEDULE**

**PATIENT APPLICATION FOR THE SLIDING FEE DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

Approval Date: January 1, 2022

Revised: January 1, 2022

Reviewed by: