



## Sliding Fee Discount Program Policy

Document/Revision No.: GFM108 01	Description: Sliding Fee Discount Program
Applies To: Administration	Compliance or Internal: Internal
Prepared By: Practice Manager	Approved By: Practice Director
Revision Date: 6/15/2020 / 05/18/2021/ 09/25/2024	Refer Questions To: Practice Administrator
Associated Documents: None	

### **Policy:**

It is the policy of Gagon Family Medicine to make available discount services to those in need. All patients seeking healthcare services at Gagon Family Medicine are assured that they will be served regardless of ability to pay including if payment would be made under Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP. 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. These patients may be uninsured or underinsured.

Gagon Family Medicine will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services. Gagon Family Medicine will base program eligibility solely on a person’s ability to pay and will not discriminate based on 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 to determine eligibility.

### **Patient Eligibility:**

Eligibility: Discounts will be based on income and family size only. Gagon Family Medicine uses the Census Bureau definitions of each.

- a. **Income includes** gross wages; salaries; tips; income from business and self-employment; unemployment compensation; workers’ compensation; Social Security; Supplemental Security Income; public assistance; veterans; payments; survivor benefits; pension or retirement income; interest; dividends; royalties; income from rental properties; estates, and trusts; educational assistance; alimony; child support; assistance from outside the household; and other miscellaneous sources.
- b. **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. Gagon Family Medicine – Huntington will also accept non-related household members when calculating family size.



- c. **Re-evaluation of eligibility:** Sliding Fee Discount Program applications cover outstanding patient balances for six months prior to application date and any balances incurred within 12 months after the 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 significant change in family income. When the applicant reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of six months or the expiration of their last Sliding Fee Discount Program application.

### **Request for Discount / Completion of Application:**

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 visits received at Gagon Family Medicine but not those services purchased from outside, including laboratory testing, drugs, and x-ray interpretation by a consulting radiologist and other similar services. Information and forms can be obtained from the Front Desk and Business Office.

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, persons are confirming their income to Gagon Family Medicine 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.

### **Income Verification:**

Applicants may provide one of the following: prior tax return, three most recent pay stubs, or other such as a letter from employer. Self-employed individuals will be required to submit detail of the three most recent months of income and expenses for the business. Self-declaration of income may be used.

Self-declaration of Income may only be used in special circumstances. Specific examples include participants who are homeless. Patients who are unable to provide written verification must provide a signed statement of income, and why they are unable to provide independent verification. This statement will be presented to Gagon Family Medicine's Practice Administrator for review and final determination as to the sliding fee percentage. Self-declared patients will be responsible for 100% of their charges until management determines the appropriate category.

### **Patient Notification:**

The following guidelines are to be followed in advertising the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

1. Notification: Gagon Family Medicine will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by the following mechanisms:
  - a. Payment Policy Brochure will be available to all patients at time of service.
  - b. Notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be offered to each patient at the time of service.



- c. Sliding Fee Discount Program Application will be included with collection notices sent out by Gagon Family Medicine.
- d. An explanation of our Sliding Fee Discount Program and our application form are available on Gagon Family Medicine's website.
- e. Gagon Family Medicine will place notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program in the clinic waiting area.

### **Discounts / Nominal Fees:**

**Discounts:** Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive a full 100% discount. Those with incomes above 100% of poverty but at or below 200% 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.

**Nominal Fee:** Patients receiving a full discount will be assessed a \$20 nominal charge per visit. However, patients will not be denied services due to the 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 may only be used in special circumstances and must be approved by Gagon Family Medicine's Practice Administrator. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's file along with an explanation (e.g., ability to pay, good will, health promotion event).

### **Collections Policy:**

Patients who fail to meet their obligations under the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be subject to the standard Gagon Family Medicine collection policy.

### **Administration:**

The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be administered through the Billing and Coding Staff. 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 healthcare services.

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 his/her application adjusted. If a patient does not provide the requested information within the two-week period, his/her application will be re-dated to the date on which s/he supplies the requested information. Any accounts turned over for collection because of the patient's delay in providing information will not be considered for the Sliding Fee Discount Program.



### **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 denied, the patient and/or responsible party must immediately establish payment arrangements with Gagon Family Medicine.

### **Record Keeping:**

Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decisions will be maintained and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Practice Administrator's Office, to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.

Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be logged in a password protected document on Gagon Family Medicine's shared directory, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage and percentage of coverage.

The Practice Administrator will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee Discount Program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials will also be logged.

### **Policy and Procedure Review:**

Annually, the amount of Sliding Fee Discount Program provided will be reviewed by the Practice Administrator. The scale will be updated based on 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.