



## **RIVERSIDE PEDIATRICS SLIDING FEE DISCOUNT POLICY & PROCEDURES**

**SUBJECT:** Sliding Fee Discount Program

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2022

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

**PURPOSE:** All patients seeking health care services at Riverside Pediatrics 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/self-pay or underinsured).

Riverside Pediatrics will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program (SFDP) to all who are unable to pay for their services. Riverside Pediatrics will base program eligibility 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 (SFS) to determine eligibility.

**Uninsured patient/Self-pay:** An "uninsured patient" is a patient who has no third-party source of payment for any portion of their medical expenses, including but not limited to, commercial or other health insurer, health care service plan, or third-party liability.

**Underinsured:** An "underinsured patient" is a patient who may have a high deductible insurance plan, high out-of-pocket maximum requirement, limited benefits, and/or noncontracted insurance plan. If you have noncontracted insurance, the insurance companies do not agree to Riverside Pediatrics rates; patients will have a greater out-of-pocket expense. Insurance rates can differ from Riverside Pediatrics rates, and you will be responsible for the difference.

**PROCEDURE:** The following guidelines are to be followed in providing the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

1. Notification: Riverside Pediatrics will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:
  - Sliding Fee Discount 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

check-in.

- Sliding Fee Discount Program application will be included with collection notices sent out by Riverside Pediatrics.
  - An explanation of our Sliding Fee Discount Program and our application form are available on Riverside Pediatrics website.
  - Riverside Pediatrics places notification of Sliding Fee Discount Program in the facility waiting areas; check-in and check-out.
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 Riverside Pediatrics office visits and procedures. Information and forms can be obtained from the Front Desk.
  3. Administration: The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be administered through the Practice Manager 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 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, persons are confirming their income to ABC HEALTH CARE as disclosed on the application form.
  5. Eligibility: Discounts will be based on income and family size only.
    - a. 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. Riverside Pediatrics will also accept non-related household members when calculating family size.
    - b. 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.
  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 to request tax return information). Self-employed individuals will be required to submit detail of the most recent two months of income and expenses for the business. Adequate information must be made available to determine eligibility for the program. If you do not have any income, please provide a letter of financial support from the person(s) that are currently supporting you.

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 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 Federal Poverty Guidelines.
8. Discounted Fee: Patients with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% poverty will be charged discounted 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 Riverside Pediatrics Practice Manager. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the patient's chart along with an explanation.
10. 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, Riverside Pediatrics 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 the approved date unless their financial situation changes significantly.
11. 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.
12. 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 effort to pay or fails to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time, Riverside Pediatrics can explore options not limited to, but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring the patient to collections.
13. Record keeping: Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decisions will be maintained and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Practice Manager's office to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.
  - a. Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be notated in Riverside Pediatrics EMR system, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage and percentage of coverage.
  - b. The Practice Manager will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee Discount Program recipients and dollar (%) amounts. Denials and applications not returned will also be noted.

14. Policy and procedure review: The Sliding Fee Scale (SFS) will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. Riverside Pediatrics will also review possible changes in our policy and procedures and for examining facility practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible patients from having access to our services.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**2022 Sliding Fee Schedule**

**Financial Assistance Application**

REVIEWED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

PRACTICE MGR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



