

Financial Assistance Policy

Purpose:

Consistent with its mission to provide high quality health and wellness services for the community, Mackinac Straits Health System is committed to providing free or discounted care to individuals who are in need of emergency or medically necessary treatment and have a household income below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines.

In accordance with the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and section 501(r) of the Internal Revenue Service code, all other uninsured patients will not be charged more than the amount generally billed to insured patients for emergency or medically necessary care.

Scope:

Mackinac Straits Health System Patients

Policy:

Free care is provided only when care is deemed medically necessary and after uninsured (or under insured) financial assistance, eligible patients have been found to meet all qualifying criteria.

Uninsured patients who do not qualify for Mackinac Straits Health System's financial assistance program (e.g., due to income and family size) will receive a discount of 40% on gross charges for medically necessary services to ensure they do not pay more for care than insured individuals. These patients are expected to pay their remaining balance for care, and may work with financial counselors to set up a payment plan based on their financial situation.

Uninsured patients who are believed to have the financial ability to purchase health insurance may be encouraged to do so in order to ensure health care accessibility and overall well-being. Mackinac Straits Health System is equipped with financial counselors to assist in this process.

Definitions

The following terms are meant to be interpreted as follows within this policy:

1. Financial assistance: Health care services provided which are not expected to result in cash inflows; medically necessary services rendered without expected payment to individuals meeting established criteria.
2. Medically Necessary: Hospital services or care rendered to a patient, both inpatient and outpatient, in order to diagnose, alleviate, correct, cure, or prevent the onset or worsening of conditions that endanger life, cause suffering or pain, cause physical deformity or malfunction, threaten to cause or aggravate a handicap, or result in overall illness or infirmity.
3. Emergency Care: Immediate care which is necessary to prevent serious jeopardy to a patient's health; serious impairment to bodily functions, and/or serious dysfunction of any organs or body parts.

4. Uninsured: Patients with no insurance or third-party assistance to help resolve their financial liability to health care providers.
5. Under-insured: Patients who have limited health care coverage, or coverage that leaves the patient with an out of pocket liability, and therefore may still require financial assistance.
6. Catastrophic Charity: Financial assistance given to patients whose medical expenses exceed one-fourth of their total household income.
7. Family: 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 members of one family.
8. Income: Includes earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources. Non cash benefits (such as food stamps and housing subsidies) do not count.

Procedure:  [Copy Link](#)

Uninsured patients will receive a discount of 40% on gross charges for medically necessary and emergency care that they receive.

A. Eligibility for Financial Assistance

Mackinac Straits Health System patients who are deemed financial assistance eligible will not be charged more than amounts generally billed to insured patients for emergency or medically necessary care.

Services eligible for financial assistance include: emergent services deemed medically necessary by Mackinac Straits Health System, and in general, care that is non-elective and needed in order to prevent death or adverse effects to the patient's health.

Patients who have a household income below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (shown in the table below) may receive free care. Patients who have a household income from 100% to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level may qualify for a reduction of 30% to 80% of total balance due.

At or Below Poverty Level	100%
150% of Poverty Level	80%
200% of Poverty Level	70%
250% of Poverty Level	50%
300% of Poverty level	30%

2026 POVERTY GUIDELINES

Persons in family/household	Poverty guidelines at or below poverty level for 2026
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1	\$15,960
2	\$21,640
3	\$27,320
4	\$33,000
5	\$38,680
6	\$44,360
7	\$50,040
8	\$55,720

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,680 for each additional person.

Federal poverty level guidelines for most current year. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

B. Example #1: An uninsured patient who qualifies for 100% financial assistance

Total Charges	\$100.00
Uninsured Adjustment (40%)	-\$40.00
Balance Due	\$ 60.00
Financial Assistance Adjustment (100%)	-\$60.00
Total balance due	\$0.00

Example #2: An uninsured patient who qualifies for 50% financial assistance

Total Charges	\$100.00
Uninsured Adjustment (40%)	-\$ 40.00
Balance Due	\$ 60.00
Financial Assistance Adjustment (50%)	-\$ 30.00
Total balance due	\$ 30.00

Example #3: A uninsured patient who qualifies for 30% financial assistance

Total Charges	\$100.00
Uninsured Adjustment (40%)	-\$ 40.00
Balance Due	\$ 60.00
Financial Assistance Adjustment (30%)	-\$ 18.00
Total balance due	\$ 42.00

Determinations for eligibility for free care will require patients to submit a complete financial assistance application and discounts for essential services are offered based on family size and income.

Account balances that are eligible for a discount are applied up to 90 days prior to when the application is received and up to 365 days after the application is received. Frequency of family re-evaluation is completed annually.

When determining patient eligibility, Mackinac Straits Health System does not deny services based on a person's race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, inability to pay or the age of the patient's account.

C. Basis for calculating amounts charged to patients qualifying for financial assistance

Individuals eligible for financial assistance under this policy shall not be charged more than the amounts generally billed (AGB) to individuals who have insurance. This value shall be calculated using the 12

month "look-back" method based on actual paid claims from Medicare fee-for-service and private health insurers. Currently this amount calculated to be 58% of gross charges.

D. List of Providers

Other than the hospital itself, the following provider groups providing emergency or medically necessary care within the facility also qualify for financial assistance.

1. Mackinac Straits Health System Physician Group

E. Catastrophic Charity Eligibility

Individuals whose household income exceeds 300% of the federal poverty guidelines, and have a catastrophic illness resulting in expenses that are greater than one-fourth of their annual income, may receive a one-time catastrophic charity adjustment of 100% discount.

F. Applying for Financial Assistance

To apply for financial assistance, patients must submit a complete application including supporting documents to Mackinac Straits Health System, Patient Financial Services, 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781 either in person or by mail. Applications can be accessed:

At the facility at all registration and access points on the main hospital campus, at all Mackinac Straits Health System physician offices, as well as at the Patient Financial Services office.

By mail, if individuals make a request by phone (call (906) 643-1185) or by mail (send request to 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781)

Online at www.MackinacStraitsHealth.org look for the Charity care icon.

To be considered eligible for financial assistance, patients must cooperate with the hospital to explore alternative means of assistance if necessary. Patients will be required to provide necessary information and documentation when applying for hospital financial assistance or other private or public payment programs. In addition to completing an application, individuals should be prepared to supply the following documentation:

- Charily Care Sliding-Fee Scale Application
- A copy of identification
- A copy of most recent income tax return
- Proof of income for household, such as recent pay stubs (3 months' worth)
- Bank statements, if requested (Not applicable for primary care services in the ambulatory or rural health clinics)
- Insurance cards, if applicable (Not applicable for primary care services in the ambulatory or rural health clinics)
- Proof of submitted Medicaid application with evidence of acceptance or rejection (Not applicable for primary care services in the ambulatory or rural health clinics)

Medical services billed by an outside agency will not be covered under the Charity Care Sliding-Fee Scale program.

Financial counselors are available to assist in the application process in person at 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781 from 8:00am-4:30pm, Monday through Friday, or by phone at (906) 643-1185.

*Note: Mackinac Straits Health System has access to translators who can assist patients who are unable to speak English.

G. Actions in the Event of Non-Payment

The collection actions Mackinac Straits Health System may take if a financial assistance application and/or payment is/are not received are described in a separate billing and collections policy.

In brief, Mackinac Straits Health System will make certain efforts to provide uninsured patients with information about our financial assistance policy, such as including a summary of it with billing statements, before we or our collection vendors take certain actions to collect your bill (these actions may include charging of interest, some civil actions, or reporting of outstanding debt to credit bureaus).

For more information on the steps Mackinac Straits Health System will take to inform uninsured patients of our financial assistance policy and the collection activities we may pursue, please see Mackinac Straits Health System.

You can request a free copy of this policy at the Patient Financial Services at Mackinac Straits Health System located at 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781 or request a free copy by mail by calling ((906) 643-1185 or mailing a request to Mackinac Straits Health System Patient Financial Services, 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781 or access it free of charge online at www.MackinacStraitsHealth.org look for the Charity Care icon.

H. Communication of Financial Assistance

Mackinac Straits Health System's financial assistance policy and financial assistance application are available to patients.

These documents are available free of charge at our facility, by mail, and online.

To access any of these documents at the facility, please visit the Patient Financial Services Office at 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781. To have a hard copy of any of these documents mailed to you, please call (906) 643-1185 or mail a request to Mackinac Straits Health System Patient Financial Services, 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781

To access the Financial Assistance Policy, the summary of the Financial Assistance Policy, or the

Financial Assistance Application, please use the following web address: www.MackinacStraitsHealth.org look for the Charity Care icon.

Mackinac Straits Health System communicates the availability of financial assistance through means which include:

Providing brochures in waiting rooms and registration areas.

Posting information about financial assistance (including summary, application, and policy) on Mackinac Straits Health System website.

Providing information about the policy and how to apply during verbal communication about the patient's bill (e.g., phone calls)

Ensuring designated staff are knowledgeable of the financial assistance policy and can answer patients' questions or refer patients to the program.

I. Ensuring Compliance

On an annual basis, the Revenue Cycle Manager or designee and/or the Finance Department or designee, will perform an audit to include:

a visit to each physician office and registration point within the hospital to ensure each point of entry has access to the updated financial assistance policy, as well as updated financial assistance applications and staff are informed on how to inform patients of each, an audit of the website to ensure the application and policy are still easily accessible, and a look-back to ensure the then reimbursement rates of the payers being used to calculate an average of "amounts generally billed" does not fall below that of what a patient who qualifies for financial assistance is being billed.

J. Summary

Patients concerned about their ability to pay for services or who would like to learn more about financial assistance should be directed to the Patient Financial Services Department at (906) 643-1185.

In accordance of the 501 (r) charity requirements, below is considered the summary of the Mackinac Straits Health System which will accompany all billing statements and be presented to patients during all financial discussions.

Consistent with its mission to provide high quality health and wellness services for the community, Mackinac Straits Health System is committed to providing free or discounted care to individuals who are in need of emergency or medically necessary treatment and have a household income below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines. Individuals who qualify for financial assistance will not be charged more than the average amounts generally billed to insured patients, for emergency or medically necessary care.

Financial counselors are available Monday through Friday, from 8:00am until 4:30pm to discuss the application process at (906)643-1185.

Mackinac Straits Health System will not pursue extraordinary collections actions against an individual without first using reasonable efforts to determine if such individual is eligible for financial assistance.

For a free copy of the entire Financial Assistance Policy and/or an Application for Financial Assistance, patients can:

Visit the website: www.MackinacStraitsHealth.org

Visit the Mackinac Straits Health System Business Office, 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781
Send a request by mail to Mackinac Straits Health System Business Office, 1140 North State Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781
Call the Business Office at (906) 643-1185.