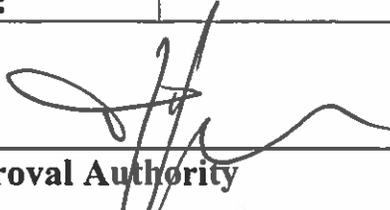


Seattle-King County Department of Public Health Policy

Policy Title:	Personal Health Fee Policy
Final Review & Approval By:	TJ Cosgrove, CHS Division Director
Effective Date:	Immediately

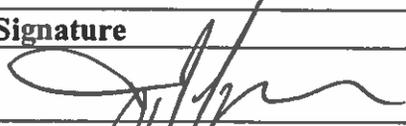
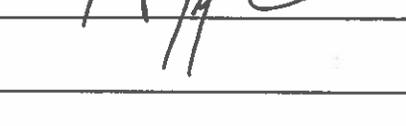


Approval Authority

10/2/17

Date

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed and as noted below

Review Date	Revision Date	Signature
3/25/19	3/18/2019	
8/19/2019	8/16/2019	
8/21/2019	8/20/2019	

Seattle-King County Department of Public Health Policy

Scope:

Personal Health Fees - Collection and Write-Offs

Policy:

Fees are assessed to clients seeking personal health care in accordance to the Public Health - Seattle and King County Fee Ordinance. Collection of fees is the responsibility of the Clinic staff at check-out. If clients leave the clinic site without paying for services, collection attempts will be made according to the following guidelines:

- Fees may be waived in accordance to the Public Health - Seattle and King County Fee Ordinance. An automated process exists in the patient billing system to waive fees according to regulations and direction of the public health director.
- Clients can elect to waive fees based on a hardship experience. Hardships are defined as an inability to pay for services rendered due to life experience. See Appendix A for examples of hardships.
- If clients present to clinic sites for services and the client's record indicates an outstanding balance is owed, clinic staff will attempt to collect the outstanding balance in accordance with the Public Health - Seattle and King County General Fee Collection/Billing Guidelines. Clients will never be denied services due to inability to pay.
- If clients do not present for services and/or a client's record reflects an outstanding balance due that has aged 18 months or greater from the date of service, Public Health - Seattle and King County will write-off the debt as part of its on-going commitment to assure access to health care for low-income clients.
- An automated process exists in the patient billing system to automatically write-off charges that have aged to 18 months or greater, removing the outstanding fees from the client's record.

Sliding Fee Discount Program:

It is the policy of Public Health-Seattle King County to provide quality healthcare to clients regardless of their ability to pay. A sliding fee schedule is used to calculate the discount rate assessed to the client.

Assessing the Federal Poverty Level: at minimum each client seeking services within Public Health-Seattle King County, will be asked semi-annually to provide information around household size and income as per the current U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Definitions for what constitutes an individual, family and income are listed below:

- **Family:** Defined as, and not limited to: a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who live together, regardless of temporary living arrangements. *For example, if an older married couple, their daughter and her husband and two children, and the older couple's nephew all lived in the same house or apartment; they would all be considered members of a single family. A family of 5, with a child away at school-that child is considered as part of the family.*
- **Individual:** An individual is a person (other than an inmate of an institution) who is not living with any relatives. An individual may be the only person living in a house or apartment, (or in group quarters such as a rooming house) in which one or more persons also live who are not related to the individual in question by birth, marriage, or adoption. *Examples of individuals residing with others include a lodger, a foster child, a ward, or an employee.*

For purposes of determining financial eligibility uncompensated services program, income includes total annual cash receipts before taxes from all sources, with the exceptions noted below:

- wages and salaries before any deductions
- net receipts from non-farm self-employment (receipts from a person's own unincorporated business, professional enterprise, or partnership, after deductions for business expenses)
- net receipts from farm self-employment (receipts from a farm which one operates as an owner, renter, or sharecropper, after deductions for farm operating expenses)
- regular payments from social security, railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, workers' compensation, veterans' payments, public assistance (including Aid to Families with Dependent Children or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, and non-Federally-funded General Assistance or General Relief money payments), and training stipends
- alimony, child support, and military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
- private pensions, government employee pensions (including military retirement pay), and regular insurance or annuity payments;
- college or university scholarships, grants, fellowships, and assistantships; and
- dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, periodic receipts from estates or trusts, and net gambling or lottery winnings.

For official statistical purposes, income does not include the following types of money received:

- capital gains
- any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, the sale of property, a house, or a car
- tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump-sum inheritances, one-time insurance payments, or compensation for injury.

Also excluded are noncash benefits, such as:

- employer-paid or union-paid portion of health insurance or other employee fringe benefits
- food or housing received in lieu of wages
- the value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms
- the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied non-farm or farm housing
- Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, school lunches, and housing assistance.

Internal References:

- Personal Health Services Fee Ordinance http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/board-of-health/~/_media/depts/health/board-of-health/documents/code/BOH-Code-Title-3.ashx
- Insurance Coverage Policy
- General Fee Collection/Billing Guidelines
- Cash Handling Procedural Guidelines
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/>
- OCHIN Professional Billing standard workflows

Implementation Responsibility:
Accounting Services, Revenue Management Unit
Central Business Office
Business Practices

Issues that need answers:

ISSUE/REASON

Appendix A: Hardship Examples

This may include, but not limited to the following:

- Financial crisis
- A medical condition, mental health disorder, or substance use disorder resulting in multiple visits
- Homelessness
- A catastrophic life event
- Domestic Violence
- Other