

Tift Regional Health System System Policies and Procedures

TITLE: Billing & Collection Effective Date: March 1, 2019 <hr/> Chief Executive Officer	FACILITIES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tift Regional Medical Center <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cook Medical Center <input type="checkbox"/> Cook Senior Living Center	SYSTEM POLICY FUNCTION: Finance <hr/> SVP, Chief Financial Officer
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Application:

This Policy applies to the selected facilities above. Such facilities are referred to as a "TRHS Facility" in the singular and collectively as "TRHS Facilities".

Definitions:

“Application Period” means the period during which TRHS must accept and process an application for financial assistance under the FAP. The Application Period begins on the date the care is provided and ends on the 240th day after TRHS provides the first post discharge billing statement.

“Billing Deadline” means the date after which TRHS or collection agency may initiate an ECA against a Responsible Individual(s) who has failed to submit an application for financial assistance under the FAP. The Billing Deadline must be specified in a written notice to the Responsible Individual(s) provided at least thirty (30) days prior to such deadline, but no earlier than one hundred twenty (120) days after the first post discharge statement.

“Completion Deadline” means the date after which TRHS or collection agency may initiate or resume an ECA against an Individual(s) who has submitted an incomplete FAP if that Individual(s) has not provided the missing information and/or documentation necessary to complete the application or denied application. The Completion Deadline must be specified in a written notice and must be no earlier than the later of (1) 30 days after TRHS provides the Individual(s) with this notice; or (2) the last day of the Application Period.

“CMC” means Cook Medical Center.

“CSLC” means Cook Senior Living Center.

“Extraordinary Collection Action (ECA)” means any action against an Individual(s) Responsible for a bill related to obtaining payment of a Self-Pay Account that requires a legal or judicial process or reporting adverse information about the Responsible Individual(s) to consumer credit reporting

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agencies/credit bureaus. ECAs do not include transferring of a Self-Pay Account to another party for purposes of collection without the use of any ECAs.

“FAP-Eligible Individual(s)” means a Responsible Individual(s) eligible for financial assistance under the FAP without regard to whether the Individual(s) has applied for assistance.

“Financial Assistance Policy (FAP)” means TRHS’s Financial Assistance Program for Uninsured Patients Policy, which includes eligibility criteria, the basis for calculating charges, the method for applying the policy, the measures to publicize the policy, and sets forth the financial assistance program.

“PFS” means Patient Financial Services, the operating unit of TRHS responsible for billing and collecting Self-Pay Accounts.

“Plain Language Summary” means a written statement that notifies an Individual(s) that TRHS offers financial assistance under the FAP for inpatient and outpatient hospital services and contains the information required to be included in such statement under the FAP.

“Responsible Individual(s)” means the patient and any other individual(s) having financial responsibility for a Self-Pay Account. There may be more than one Responsible Individual(s).

“Self-Pay Account” means that portion of a patient account that is the individual responsibility of the patient or other Responsible Individual(s), net of the application of payments made by any available healthcare insurance or other third-party payer (including co-payments, co-insurance and deductibles), and net of any reduction or write off made with respect to such patient account after application of an Assistance Program, as applicable.

“TRHS” means Tift Regional Health System, Inc.

“TRMC” means Tift Regional Medical Center.

Purpose:

This policy applies to TRHS and, together with the Financial Assistance Policy (“FAP”), is intended to meet the requirements of applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, without limitation, Section 501(r) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and the regulations thereunder. This policy establishes the actions that may be taken in the event of nonpayment for medical care provided by TRHS Facilities, including but not limited to extraordinary collection actions. The guiding principles behind this policy are to treat all patients and Individual(s)'s Responsible equally with dignity and respect and to ensure appropriate billing and collection procedures are uniformly followed and to ensure that reasonable efforts are made to determine whether the Individual(s) Responsible for payment of all or a portion of a patient account is eligible for assistance under the Financial Assistance Policy.

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Policy:

Subject to compliance with the provisions of this policy, TRHS may take any and all legal actions, including Extraordinary Collection Actions, to obtain payment for medical services provided.

A. TRHS will not engage in ECAs, either directly or by any debt collection agency or other party to which the hospital has referred the patient's debt, before reasonable efforts are made to determine whether a Responsible Individual(s) is eligible for assistance under the FAP.

B. All patients will be offered a Plain Language Summary and an application form for financial assistance under the FAP as part of the discharge or intake process from a hospital.

C. At least three separate statements for collection of Self-Pay Accounts shall be mailed or emailed to the last known address of each Responsible Individual(s); provided, however, that no additional statements need be sent after a Responsible Individual(s) submits a complete application for financial assistance under the FAP or has paid-in-full. At least sixty (60) days shall have elapsed between the first and last of the required three mailings. It is the Responsible Individual(s) obligation to provide a correct mailing address at the time of service or upon moving. If an account does not have a valid address, the determination for "Reasonable Effort" will have been made. All Single Patient Account statements of Self-Pay Accounts will include, but not be limited to:

1. An accurate summary of the hospital services covered by the statement;
2. The charges for such services;
3. The amount required to be paid by the Responsible Individual(s) (or, if such amount is not known, a good faith estimate of such amount as of the date of the initial statement); and
4. A conspicuous written notice that notifies and informs the Responsible Individual(s) about the availability of Financial Assistance under the hospital FAP including the telephone number of the department and direct website address where copies of documents may be obtained.

D. At least one of the statements mailed or emailed will include written notice that informs the Responsible Individual(s) about the ECAs that are intended to be taken if the Responsible Individual(s) does not apply for financial assistance under the FAP or pay the amount due by the Billing Deadline. Such statement must be provided to the Responsible Individual(s) at least thirty (30) days before the deadline specified in the statement.

E. Responsible Individual(s) propensity to pay will be scored based on that assessment of the Responsible Individual(s) likelihood to pay and dollar amount of the Self-Pay account.

F. Prior to initiation of any ECAs, an oral attempt will be made to contact Responsible Individual(s) by telephone at the last known telephone number, if any, at least once during the

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series of mailed or emailed statements if the account remains unpaid. During all conversations, the patient or Responsible Individual(s) will be informed about the financial assistance that may be available under the FAP.

G. ECAs may be commenced as follows:

1. If any Responsible Individual(s) fail to apply for financial assistance under the FAP by one hundred twenty (120) days after the first post discharge statement, and the Responsible Parties have received a statement with a Billing Deadline described in Section E. above, then TRHS or collection agency may initiate ECAs.
2. If any Responsible Individual(s) submits an incomplete application for financial assistance under the FAP prior to the Application Deadline, then ECAs may not be initiated until after each of the following steps has been completed:
 - a. PFS provides the Responsible Individual(s) with a written notice that describes the additional information or documentation required under the FAP in order to complete the application for financial assistance, which notice will include a copy of the Plain Language Summary.
 - b. PFS provides the Responsible Individual(s) with at least thirty (30) days' prior written notice of the ECAs that TRHS or collection agency may initiate against the Responsible Individual(s) if the FAP application is not completed or payment is not made; provided, however, that the Completion Deadline for payment may not be set prior to one hundred twenty (120) days after the first post discharge statement.
3. If the Responsible Individual(s) who has submitted the incomplete application completes the application for financial assistance, and PFS determines definitively that the Responsible Individual(s) is ineligible for any financial assistance under the FAP, TRHS will inform the Responsible Individual(s) in writing the denial and include a thirty (30) days' prior written notice of the ECAs that TRHS or collection agency may initiate against the Responsible Individual(s); provided, however, that the Billing Deadline may not be set prior to one hundred twenty (120) days after the first post discharge statement.
4. If the Responsible Individual(s) who has submitted the incomplete application fails to complete the application by the Completion Deadline set in the notice provided pursuant to Section G.2.b. above, then ECAs may be initiated.
5. If an application, complete or incomplete, for financial assistance under the FAP is submitted by a Responsible Individual(s), at any time prior to the Application Deadline, TRHS will suspend ECAs while such financial assistance application is pending.

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- H. After the commencement of ECAs is permitted under Section G. above, collection agencies shall be authorized to report unpaid accounts to credit agencies, and to file judicial or legal action, garnishment, obtain judgment liens and execute upon such judgment liens using lawful means of collection; provided, however, that prior approval of the TRHS legal department shall be required before initial lawsuits may be initiated. TRHS and external collection agencies may also take any and all legal other actions including but not limited to telephone calls, emails, texts, mailing notices, and skip tracing to obtain payment for medical services provided.

POLICY AVAILABILITY

Individuals may contact the TRHS Business Office at 229-353-6124 (option 2) for information regarding eligibility or the programs that may be available, to request that a copy of the FAP, the FAP application form, or Collection Policy be mailed to you, or if you need a copy of the FAP, FAP application form, or Collection Policy translated to Spanish. Full disclosure of the FAP, FAP application form, and Collection Policy may be found at www.tiftregional.com. A paper copy of the TRHS FAP, FAP application form, and Collection Policy can be obtained at the TRHS Facility located at 907 E. 18th St., Tifton, Georgia 31794 or at TRHS Facility patient financial services, admissions and registration areas, and emergency department.

Original Effective Date: March 1, 2019

Revise/Review History:

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