

Undocumented Patients Accessing Inpatient and Emergency Department Services at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (CCRMC)

Due to a serious budget deficit, Contra Costa County's Board of Supervisors eliminated non-emergency benefits in the Basic Health Care Program (BHC) for adults who are undocumented effective May 1, 2009. This decision only affects undocumented adult residents of Contra Costa County with incomes less than 300% of poverty. Individuals who are not residents of Contra Costa County, independent of their documentation, do not qualify for the BHC Program or exceptions from private pay ("PO") status. Foreign visitors (i.e., nationals from other countries with appropriate legal status) are not eligible for the BHC program or exceptions from "PO" status. Undocumented individuals with incomes above the income limit are not eligible for the BHC program or exceptions from "PO" status.

The procedure below describes the process and financial class codes that will be utilized when eligible undocumented adults are admitted to CCRMC or receive care in the Emergency Department (ED).

Financial Class codes:

"PJ" = Financially eligible undocumented adults accessing care through the emergency department

"PK" = Financially eligible undocumented adults admitted to Contra Costa Regional Medical Center

These Financial class codes will be assigned to a patient if the financial requirements listed above are met. If special authorization is granted by the attending physician (see sections III and IV), "PJ" or "PK" financial class code will be assigned to the patient for up to 30 days after discharge. This will allow the patient to receive medications, lab & radiology studies and specialty visits through CCHS during this time. This code will display in e2Search and EPIC for registration, appointment unit and billing staff to view for appropriate coding during outpatient visits in the County clinics. If special authorization is not granted, the patients' financial status will be changed back to "PO" at the time of discharge from CCHS.

Please note that all financially eligible undocumented adults should get their primary care at one of the community clinics (Brookside, La Clínica or Planned Parenthood) at the time of discharge, regardless of their financial class code.

I. Financial Screening

1. Financial Counselors will interview patients to determine if medically necessary care will be provided at no cost.
2. If eligible, the financial class code will be changed from "PO" to "PK" or "PJ" for the inpatient stay or ED visit, and an authorization given for primary care at one of the community clinics – Brookside, La Clínica or Planned Parenthood. Authorizations provide a mechanism for the County to reimburse the clinics for visits utilizing the funds allocated by the County's Board of Supervisors.

3. If ineligible or if a financial counselor does not interview the patient prior to discharge from Inpatient or ED, the financial class will remain **"PO."**
4. After the financial screening, Financial Counselors will complete the "Undocumented Patients Financial Assessment/Specialty Referral Form" and place it in the chart on the unit next to the face sheet or in the chart in the ED (see copy of form attached to this procedure).

II. Attending Physician determined that specialty or ancillary follow-up care is NOT required in the County clinics.

1. All patients with a financial class code of **"PK"** for an inpatient stay, or **"PJ"** for an Emergency Department visit are given authorization for primary care at one of the community clinics – Brookside, La Clínica or Planned Parenthood.
2. **Lab tests and radiology studies:** At discharge, **"PK"** and **"PJ"** patients will be given lab and radiology requisition slips, and advised to have their physician at the non-CCHS community clinic help coordinate their ancillary care at the post discharge appointment.
3. **Discharge medications:** **"PJ"** and **"PB"** patients will have their prescriptions faxed to the pharmacy of their choice. Please inform the patients that Wal-Mart, Target, Walgreen's and Rite-Aid offer a 30-day supply of some medications as low as \$4, and have cheaper generic prices for some of their medications. Try to use generic medications listed on the low-cost formulary whenever possible. In special situations where an expensive medication needs to be dispensed in an effort to reduce length of hospitalization (i.e. Lovenox injections for DVT), the inpatient clinical pharmacist can be contacted for authorization.
4. **Discharge medical records:** Medical records will automatically send the discharge summary, medication list, and recent labs to the community clinic indicated on the "Financial Assessment Form."
5. At the time of discharge from the ER or inpatient unit, the patients' financial status will convert back to **"PO"**

III. Attending Physician determined that specialty or ancillary follow-up care is REQUIRED in the County clinics after discharge from inpatient service

1. **Making the decision to provide specialty follow-up care at CCHS** should only be done in select patients with complex medical or surgical conditions that cannot be effectively managed by the community clinics, or in situations in which follow-up with CCHS will result in a significantly earlier discharge from the hospital. Generally speaking, the community clinics are capable of managing most chronic medical conditions and should be responsible for managing these conditions on an ongoing basis. If there is a question as to whether a clinic has the capacity to

care for the patient, attending physicians are encouraged to call and speak with the community clinic doctor (contact numbers are on the back of the "Undocumented Patients Financial Assessment/Specialty Referral Form"). Authorization to allow follow-up care at CCHS is granted to Family Medicine, Internal Medicine and Surgery Registrars/Attending Physicians.

- a. If the attending physician determines that the patient needs follow-up care at CCHS, the physician is required to write the medical indication on the "Undocumented Patients Financial Assessment/Specialty Referral Form". The completed form must be given to utilization review for auditing purposes to ensure the appropriate use of follow-up care at CCHS.
 - b. The ward clerk will fax the form to Financial Counseling at 925-370-5267.
 - c. Financial Counselor will enter the financial class code of "**PK**" in e2Search. This financial class code will provide access to specialty appointment, medications and lab studies up to 30 days. After 30 days, the financial class code will be changed to "**PO**".
2. **Follow-up appointments:** The ward clerk will make Specialty clinic appointments at CCHS for "**PK**" patients at the time of discharge. If appointments are unavailable for the desired specialty, the wait list procedure will be followed (See Ambulatory Care policy #). All "**PK**" patients will follow-up in the community clinic for ongoing primary care, regardless if they are scheduled for specialty care with CCHS. The financial counselor will provide the patient with the community clinic phone number and the patient will be responsible for making the follow-up appointment.
 3. **Discharge medications:** "**PK**" patients will have their prescriptions faxed to Walgreen's.
 4. **Lab tests and radiology studies:** At discharge, patients authorized to obtain specialty follow-up care with CCHS will obtain lab and radiology studies up to one month post-discharge.
 5. **Discharge medical records:** Medical records will automatically send the discharge summary, medication list, and recent labs to the community clinic indicated on the "Financial Assessment Form."

IV. Attending Physician determined that specialty or ancillary follow-up care is REQUIRED in the County clinics after discharge from Emergency Room

1. **Making the decision to provide specialty follow-up care at CCHS:** Financially eligible undocumented patients discharged from the emergency room can obtain authorization to receive specialty clinic visits, labs and studies through CCHS for up to 30 days post ED visit. This should only be done in select patients

who have complex medical or surgical issues that cannot be effectively managed in the community clinics. Generally speaking, this authorization should only be granted in a temporary effort to reduce the possibility of hospital admission or frequent ER visits.

- a. If it is determined that follow-up care through CCHS is needed after discharge from the emergency room, the ER physician must obtain authorization from the Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or Surgery Registrar on call. The indication for referral must be documented by the ER physician on the "Undocumented Patients Financial Assessment/Specialty Referral Form" generated by the financial counselor.
 - b. After the ER physician completes, signs and returns the form to the Financial Counselor, the counselor will change the patient's financial class to "**PJ**" for up to 30 days after the ED visit.
2. **Follow-up appointments** with CCHS specialty clinics will be scheduled by the ER discharge nurse/clerk as described in section III.
3. **Discharge Medications:** "**PJ**" patients will be directed to Walgreen's to have their medications filled
4. **Lab and radiology studies** – At discharge, patients authorized to obtain specialty follow-up care with CCHS will obtain lab and radiology studies up to one month post-discharge.
5. **Discharge Medical Records:** Medical records will automatically send the discharge summary, medication list, and recent labs to the community clinic indicated on the "Financial Assessment Form."