

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA NEPHROLOGY

Discount Fee Policy

Southwest Georgia Nephrology (SWGA-N) is committed to serving all patients including people who may not have regular access to health care because of distance and/or economics. You will not be denied services based on inability to pay. ***This does not mean services are free, as would be the case in a free clinic. Rather, the fees are discounted in a manner to make health care more affordable.*** In order to facilitate that access, SWGA-N offers a program of discounted fees to those clients that are economically challenged or uninsured and therefore unable pay the standard fees for service. Discounts are offered based upon family/household size and annual income. A sliding fee schedule is used to calculate the basic discount and is updated each year using the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Once approved, the discount will be honored for one (1) year, after which the patient must reapply. **Patients are asked to pay before they see a clinician.**

- **First time patients will be asked to pay \$35 at the time of Check-In and depending on where they fall on the Discount Fee Schedule, any remaining balance will be collected when you check-out**
- **Established patient's payment will be based on where they fall on the Discount Fee Schedule with \$30 collected when the patient checks in and if the total charges are more the remaining balance will need to be paid at checkout**
- **If you qualify for our Discount Fee we will not be able to bill any balances. All fees are due at the time of visit, NO EXCEPTIONS**

Please ask our receptionist for an application or find it enclosed with our New Patient packet. The application must be returned prior to services rendered so we can notify you if you qualify for the program.

Services that apply to our Discount Policy are only those when the patient is seen face-to-face, whether in our office or hospital setting, by a Southwest Georgia Nephrology Clinic provider. It does not apply to hospital charges or any testing or procedures done in the hospital or other medical facility.

Discount Application Process

A completed application including required documentation of the home address and household income must be on file and approved by the Practice Administrator before a discount will be granted. If the applicant appears eligible for Medicaid, a written denial of coverage will be required. Adolescent patients seeking confidential care are exempt from the application process and services are provided at the nominal rate. We have established this policy to ensure that a non-discriminatory, uniform and reasonable charge is consistently and evenly applied without regard to the treating clinician.

Patients will be expected to pay a percentage of the full fee based on your hardship level. A discounted fee schedule applies only to direct patient charges. If you think you may qualify for the discounted fee, you will need to complete a written application to determine financial eligibility. Your privacy will be protected. In order to determine eligibility, please see the Proof of Income section below.

Eligibility will also be based on current participation in federal/state public assistance programs including: Social Security Disability income (SSDi), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or free or reduced school lunch programs.

Household size is determined by mother, father, and dependent children under 18 years of age. Other adults in the household, even though related, are not included. Front desk staff will ask if any pertinent information has changed since the patient's last visit. For example, if the patients' annual income has changed, then a re-evaluation of your discount status would be necessary.

Proof of Income

Must be current information and includes, but is not limited to any or all of the following. Where proof of before tax income is not available, income before taxes can be estimated from proof of net income.

- a. Most recent income tax return or W-2.
- b. Two most recent pay stubs.
- c. Most recent unemployment check.
- d. Proof of other household income (Social Security, pension, etc.).
- e. Bank statements showing direct deposits.

When a patient schedules an appointment, the scheduler will remind patients that their payment will be due at the time of the service.

Refusal to Pay

When all reasonable collection efforts/enforcement steps as established by this policy and the SWGA-N Collections Policy have been exhausted non-compliant patients will be notified that they will no longer be eligible for the Discount Program and may possibly be discharged from the practice. Discharged patients frequently will request an appointment with a provider.

These patients may be reinstated under the following conditions:

- With a new referral from a licensed physician and permission from SWGA-N physician
- Make every effort to bring their balance current
- Agree to comply with their payment plan
- Pay the next amount due at the time of service