



**COLORADO**

Department of Health Care  
Policy & Financing

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Denver, CO 80203

# Hospital Discounted Care and Licensed Health Care Professionals

*Fact Sheet December 2024*

## Hospital Discounted Care Overview

Hospital Discounted Care (HDC) went into effect on September 1, 2022 and applies to all general acute and critical access hospitals and their off-campus locations, all freestanding emergency departments, and all licensed health care professionals (professionals) who provide services to patients seen in those settings. Patients who qualify can be billed no more than the rates set by the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), and their payment plans cannot exceed 2% of their household gross monthly income and may be set for a maximum of 36 payments. Patients cannot be sent to collections until they have missed three consecutive payments or prior to day 182 past their date of service or date of discharge, whichever is later.

## Reporting Requirements

Professionals are required to report discounted care, payment plan, and collection information for all patients who have been determined eligible for HDC for all services provided within a hospital, a hospital's off campus location, or a free-standing emergency room. Data must be able to be evaluated across race, ethnicity, age, and primary spoken language. For further clarification on the data reporting requirements consult the Professional Data Reporting Template on the Hospital Discounted Care website (<https://hcpf.colorado.gov/hospital-discounted-care>). Beginning September 1, 2025 and every September 1 in following years, professionals who provided services to eligible patients must submit the information related to those patients, including payment plan and collection data, directly to HCPF. The reporting period for data due on September 1, 2025 will include data between January 1, 2025 and June 30, 2025. The reporting period for every September 1 after 2025 will be for the proceeding State Fiscal Year July 1 to June 30 (Example: data due on September 1, 2026 will include data from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026).

## Compliance and Fines

Providers who are found to be out of compliance with the HDC law are subject to corrective action plans and fines, as determined by HCPF. Providers who are found to be knowingly or



willfully non-compliant with the HDC law may be fined up to \$5,000. Providers who continue to be non-compliant may be fined up to \$5,000 per week until the provider takes corrective action to be in compliance.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Do professionals who are not directly employed by the hospital have to abide by the HDC law?
  - Professionals who provide services to patients within the hospital or the hospital's off campus locations, or in a freestanding emergency room must abide by the HDC rules regardless of whether they are directly employed, contracted by, or otherwise providing services at the hospital.
- What if the professionals bill under a different TIN than the hospital?
  - The setting, not the billing, is what makes a service eligible for discount under HDC. It does not matter if the hospital bills for everything, if the professionals bill under a different TIN, or if the professionals are not employed by the hospital. If the service is provided within the hospital or the hospital's off campus locations, or in a freestanding emergency room, it is subject to the HDC law.
- Do professionals have to abide by the HDC rules for patients seen in their own offices not associated with the hospital?
  - No, only services provided within the hospital or the hospital's off campus locations, or in a freestanding emergency room must be discounted under the law.
- Are services provided at every hospital in the state required to be billed under Hospital Discounted Care rules for eligible patients?
  - No, Hospital Discounted Care is not applied at every hospital. For Hospital Discounted Care rules to be applied, service must have been at one of the following location categories:
    - Hospitals licensed as General Hospitals
    - Hospitals established pursuant to 23-21-503 or 25-29-103 (University of Colorado Hospital Authority and Denver Health and Hospital Authority)
    - Freestanding Emergency Departments
    - Outpatient Health-care facilities licensed as on-campus departments or services of a hospital or that are listed as off-campus locations under a hospital's license
- What if a patient's surgery is provided in the hospital but their follow up appointments (post-op, PT, etc.) are provided in the professional's office?
  - In that situation, the surgery would fall under HDC but the follow up would not.
- What are the professionals' responsibilities related to posting or providing information on HDC?
  - There are no requirements for professionals related to posting or providing information to patients. The hospitals and freestanding emergency rooms are



- responsible for providing the patients with information on HDC and how to apply, and for sending the patients' determination information to the professionals.
- When can professionals send bills to patients who receive services in one of the covered settings?
    - Hospitals are responsible for screening and completing the applications for patients. Patients should be screened within 45 days of their date of service. For patients who are screened and decide not to apply for HDC, their bills can be sent as soon as the patient has indicated they do not intend to apply. For patients who are screened and do want to apply, their bills cannot be sent until they have completed the application and have been informed of their determination. For patients who are not screened and have not signed a Decline Screening form within 45 days of their date of service, their bill can be sent beginning on day 46. Professionals cannot send bills to patients until they have received information from the hospital indicating whether the patient has been screened and/or completed their application and what the determination was if the patient did apply, or if the patient has signed the Decline Screening form. Hospitals and professionals should work together to determine what notification process works best for all involved.
  - How do professionals know which patients qualify for HDC?
    - Hospitals are responsible for setting up communication with professionals on how information is relayed to professionals regarding patients who have been approved or who are in the process of screening and/or applying. There are various options for how this information may be provided, including hospitals granting access for professionals to the hospital's electronic health record system so that professionals may look up their patients themselves to see if they have been approved or are in the process of applying for Hospital Discounted Care, or by setting up some other method of communication (email, fax, shared document, etc.) for professionals to receive updates on their shared patients. Whichever way the hospital chooses to communicate the information to professionals must be clearly explained and adhered to, and it is the responsibility of the hospital to ensure the professionals have the ability to access the information.

## For more information contact

**State Programs Unit - For General Questions**  
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**Hospital Discounted Care Home Page**



<https://hcpf.colorado.gov/hospital-discounted-care>

