**JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING -** **Sliding Fee Discount Program**

**POLICY:** To make available free or discounted services to those in need.

**PURPOSE:** All patients seeking health care services at JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING are assured that they

will be served regardless of ability to pay. No one is refused service because of lack of financial means to

pay.

This program is designed to provide free or discounted care to those who have no means, or limited

means, to pay for their medical services (uninsured or underinsured).

JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services.

JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING will base program eligibility on a person’s ability to pay and will not

discriminate on the basis of an individual’s race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual

orientation, or gender identity. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are used in creating and annually

updating the sliding fee schedule (SFS) to determine eligibility.

**PROCEDURE:**

The following guidelines are to be followed in providing the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

1. Notification: JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING will notify patients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:

• Payment Policy Brochure will be available to all patients at the time of service.

• Notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be offered to each patient upon

admission.

• Sliding Fee Discount Program application will be included with collection notices sent out by

JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING.

• An explanation of our Sliding Fee Discount Program and our application form are available on

JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING’s website.

• JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING places notification of Sliding Fee Discount Program in the clinic waiting

area.

2. Request for discount: Requests for discounted services may be made by patients, family

members, social services staff or others who are aware of existing financial hardship. The Sliding

Fee Discount Program will only be made available for clinic visits. Information and forms can be

obtained from the Front Desk and the Business Office.

3. Administration: The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be administered through the

Business Office Manager or his/her designee. Information about the Sliding Fee Discount Program

policy and procedure will be provided to patients. Staff are to offer assistance for completion of

the application. Dignity and confidentiality will be respected for all who seek and/or are provided

health care services.

4. Completion of Application: The patient/responsible party must complete the Sliding Fee Discount

Program application in its entirety. Staff will be available, as needed, to assist patient/responsible

party with applications. By signing the Sliding Fee Discount Program application, persons are

confirming their income to JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING as disclosed on the application form.

5. Eligibility: Discounts will be based on income and family size only.

a. Family is defined as: a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder)

related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including

related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING

will also accept non-related household members when calculating family size.

b. Income includes: gross wages; salaries; tips; income from business and self-employment;

unemployment compensation; workers' compensation; Social Security; Supplemental

Security Income; veterans' payments; survivor benefits; pension or retirement income;

interest; dividends; royalties; income from rental properties, estates, and trusts; alimony;

child support; assistance from outside the household; and other miscellaneous sources.

6. Income verification: Applicants may provide one of the following: prior year W-2, two most recent

pay stubs, letter from employer, or Form 4506-T (if W-2 not filed). Self-employed individuals will

be required to submit detail of the most recent three months of income and expenses for the

business. Adequate information must be made available to determine eligibility for the program.

Self- declaration of Income may be used. Patients who are unable to provide written verification

may provide a signed statement of income.

7. Discounts: Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive a full 100% discount for

health care services. Those with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% of

poverty, will be charged a nominal fee according to the attached sliding fee schedule. The sliding

fee schedule will be updated during the first quarter of every calendar year with the latest FPL

Guidelines.

8. Nominal Fee: Patients with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% poverty will be

charged a nominal fee according to the attached sliding fee schedule and based on their family

size and income. However, patients will not be denied services due to an inability to pay. The

nominal fee is not a threshold for receiving care and thus, is not a minimum fee or co-payment.

9. Waiving of Charges: In certain situations, patients may not be able to pay the nominal or discount

fee. Waiving of charges must be approved by JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING’s designated official. Any

waiving of charges should be documented in the patient’s file along with an explanation.

10. Applicant notification: The Sliding Fee Discount Program determination will be provided to the

applicant(s) in writing, and will include the percentage of Sliding Fee Discount Program write off,

or, if applicable, the reason for denial. If the application is approved for less than a 100% discount

or denied, JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING will work with the patient and/or responsible party to establish

payment arrangements. Sliding Fee Discount Program applications cover outstanding patient

balances for six months prior to application date and any balances incurred within 12 months

after the approved date, unless their financial situation changes significantly. The applicant has

the option to reapply after the 12 months have expired or anytime there has been a significant

 change in family income. When the applicant reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of

six months or the expiration of their last Sliding Fee Discount Program application.

11. Refusal to Pay: If a patient verbally expresses an unwillingness to pay or vacates the premises

without paying for services, the patient will be contacted in writing regarding their payment

obligations. If the patient is not on the sliding fee schedule, a copy of the sliding fee discount

program application will be sent with the notice. If the patient does not make effort to pay or fails

to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time, JUNIPER TREE

COUNSELING can explore options not limited to, but including offering the patient a payment plan,

waiving of charges, or referring the patient to collections.

13. Record keeping: Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decisions will be maintained

and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Business Office Manager’s Office, in

an effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.

a. Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be logged in

JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING’s practice management system, noting names of applicants, dates of

coverage and percentage of coverage.

b. The Business Office Manager will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee

Discount Program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials and applications not returned will

also be logged.

14. Policy and procedure review: The SFS will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty

Guidelines. JUNIPER TREE COUNSELING will also review possible changes in our policy and procedures

and for examining institutional practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible patients from

having access to our community care provisions.

15. Budget: During the annual budget process, an estimated amount of Sliding Fee Discount Program

service will be placed into the budget as a deduction from revenue.