

Annual Nonprofit Hospital Community Benefit Report:

Community Benefit Narrative

FY2009

Union Hospital of Cecil County

**106 Bow Street
Elkton, MD 21921**

Overview

For 100 years, Union Hospital of Cecil County has been dedicated to continually improving the health and wellness of the people in the communities we serve. Situated conveniently in Elkton, Maryland, Union Hospital is a licensed 116-bed, not-for-profit, full-service community hospital that provides comprehensive care to Cecil County and the surrounding areas of Western New Castle County, Delaware, and Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania. During FY 2009, Union Hospital serviced 8,521 admissions, 117,164 outpatient referrals and 45,105 emergency department visits.

Community and Population Served

Union Hospital's primary service area include the towns of Elkton, Elk Mills, Childs, Chesapeake City, Earleville, Warwick, Cecilton, North East, Charlestown, and Rising Sun in Cecil County. The Hospital's secondary service area includes the towns in Western Cecil County of Conowingo, Colora, Port Deposit, Perryville, and Perry Point; in Delaware Bear, Middletown, and Townsend; and Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Cecil County, one of Maryland's fastest growing counties, has an annual growth rate of approximately 2.2%. In 2008, the total population of Cecil County was estimated at 102,380, there were 36,576 households, and 26,314 families residing in the county. An average of 51.6% of the population in our service area is female. Approximately 11.1% of the population is 65+. The population density was 269 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the county was 93.2% White and 6.8% Non-White. The median age is 36 years. The median income for a household in the county was \$61,226, and the median income for a family was \$70,120. About 5.40% of families and 7.20% of the population were below the poverty line, including 9.20% of those under age 18 and 7.70% of those ages 65 and over. In fiscal year 2009, 7% of the hospital's patients were uninsured and 17.3% were Medicaid recipients.

Community Needs Assessment

Improving the health of our community requires collaboration among community members and active participation in the planning and implementation of health programs. To identify community need, Union Hospital works with community leaders from local service providers such as the Cecil County Health Department and the Cecil County Department of Social Services. One tool Union Hospital utilized to determine community need is the Cecil County Health Department's Health Profile 2005 Report. This health profile is based on information from several sources, including the Cecil County Community Health Survey, which gives important health information including self-reported health behaviors.

The major health needs of the community identified in the 2004 Community Health survey are: Coronary Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease, Accidents, Diabetes, Pneumonia and Influenza, Suicide, Chronic Liver Disease, and Septicemia.

Governed by a Board of Directors, made up of community leaders, Union Hospital's strategic initiatives are evaluated and with the assistance of Executive Management, determinations are made as to the primary program focus. Each year, Union Hospital fulfills our commitment to improve the health of our community and meet the identified needs by sponsoring community-based clinical services (such as free screenings and clinics), offering health education programs, support groups and self-help programs, providing needed treatments to the underserved and training the future leaders of health care. Our employees also are dedicated to supporting area organizations that serve our community.

The impact of Union Hospital's community benefit activities on the health of area residents over the past five years should be identified in the 2009 Cecil County Community Health Survey which Cecil County Health Department conducted in partnership with Union Hospital in the summer of 2009. Determination of future programs will be identified in part through this survey as well.

Gaps In Availability of Specialist Providers

Union Hospital of Cecil County ("UHCC"), established in 1909, is a full-service community hospital located in Elkton, Maryland. Our 149-bed, not-for-profit hospital is dedicated to providing superior, personalized, quality health care to our neighbors, families and friends. We are the safety-net provider for the county, offering care to those without the ability or means to afford the highly specialized treatments provided by specialists. Our mission is to enhance the health and well-being of residents in Cecil County and neighboring communities, by giving those without means the access to this care. In the past fiscal year, we provided for over 56,567 patient encounters, which amounted to a net health care benefit of \$3,778,089 to Cecil County and the surrounding communities. Of that amount, UHCC provided \$1,270,050 in free health care through our charity care program, as well as free and discounted services to over 158,982 patients through our Community Health Services programs. In Cecil County and Elkton, we have a high percentage of minority residents, approximately 15% in Elkton, and nearly 12% of those living in Elkton live below the poverty line, all of whom rely on the services provided by UHCC for their on-going treatment. Cecil is a rural, overlooked county nestled between Baltimore and the Eastern Shore, and it is difficult to attract physicians to this poor, rural area.

UHCC provides free and reduced cost access to critically needed services, such as intricate specialties for which there are far too few practitioners and even fewer who are willing to forgo a lucrative private practice to be employed at a rural, community hospital. UHCC currently has few to no physicians on the medical staff that specializes in certain services or their associated illnesses and oftentimes, only by traveling are the patients in the Cecil County community able to obtain care in these specialties. Cecil County has a great unmet need for certain medical services when compared to the state and to the nation as a whole. This is due largely in part to our rural, remote location, as well as the high degree of specialization required for the practice of medicine.

Of the specialties on our medical staff, the following offer the greatest challenges with limited to no providers available:

Dermatology – 0 providers

Endocrinology – 1 provider

Internal Medicine – 1 provider

Neurosurgery - .5 providers

Oral Maxillofacial Surgeons – 0 providers

Psychiatry – 0 providers

Rheumatology – 1 provider (*beginning November 9, 2009*)

Urology – .75 providers

Vascular Surgery - .75 providers

Physician Subsidies

In order to better serve the residents of Cecil County and provide them with access to needed medical services, Union Hospital offers income guarantees to attract physicians to the community. The income guarantee is more like a loan, or an advance, that is forgiven over time, to help a physician establish his or her own private practice. The physician has the flexibility to build the practice as they wish and the hospital fills a vacancy in a much needed specialty

Appendix 1:

Description of Charity Care Policy

The purpose of Union Hospital's Financial Assistance (Charity Care) policy is to ensure that hospital staff follows a consistent and equitable process in granting charity/financial assistance to appropriate patients while respecting the individual's dignity and that the hospital's policy is in agreement with the established Maryland State Financial Assistance Guidelines regarding charity care.

This policy describes the application process for the Financial Assistance Program, the information required to verify income and assets, the timeline for application review, and the tiered adjustments based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The application for Financial Assistance is available to all underinsured and uninsured patients of Union Hospital. Applications are located throughout the hospital, emergency room, and outpatient areas. In addition, the Financial Assistance application and brochure are available on the hospital's website. All inpatient, self pay patients are visited by finance staff and screened for the Financial Assistance program as well as for Medicaid and other state and county programs. Following discharge from the hospital, each patient receives a summary of charges which includes notice of the Financial Assistance program and a designated contact telephone number

Appendix 2:

Charity Care Policy

UNION HOSPITAL Elkton, Maryland		Policy Number: F-415
		Effective Date: 3/2009
Hospital Policies and Procedures		
Financial Assistance Policy and Procedure		
Developed / Edited By:	Charles A. Poggioli, Dir., Revenue Cycle	Date: 3/2009
Reviewed By:	Laurie Beyer, S.V.P. & CFO	Date: 3/2009
Approved By:	Laurie Beyer, S.V.P. & CFO	Date: 3/2009
		Established Date: 03/2004
Departments Affected:	Patient Financial Services	
Reviewed Dates:	03/2004, 6/2004, 9/2004, 3/2006,12/2008; 2/2009; 3/2009	
Revised Dates:	03/2004 (replaces Charity Care Policy and Procedure), 6/2004; 9/2004; 3/2006; 12/2008; 2/2009; 3/2009	
JCAHO Standard(s):	N/A	
HIPAA Standard(s):		

POLICY:

It is the policy of Union Hospital of Cecil County to assist underinsured or uninsured patients by offering services to patients at a reduced cost based on demonstrated inability to pay. Determination shall be based on the patient’s income, assets, expenses, and the current Federal Poverty Guidelines.

PURPOSE:

To ensure that hospital staff follows a consistent and equitable process in granting charity/financial assistance to appropriate patients while respecting the individual’s dignity and that the hospital’s policy is in agreement with the established Maryland State Financial Assistance guidelines regarding charity care.

PROCEDURE:

General Procedure

Patient shall make application for UHCC’s Financial Assistance Program using the Maryland State approved hospital form. The form must be accompanied by verification of income and assets (if requested). Applications returned without requested information may be denied pending receipt.

Appropriate verification may include:

- a. Pay stubs, unemployment benefits, social security checks, cash assistance checks, alimony or child support checks
- b. Federal and/or state tax returns

- c. Bank statements or financial records
- d. If the patient resides at a shelter, written verification of active residence and the provision of room and board must be obtained from the shelter Administrator/Director.
- e. Medical Assistance Denial Letter (if requested)
- f. MA denial may not be required if the hospital representative determines that the patient will not qualify based on an initial interview.
- g. Proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency (if requested)

Items needed for approval are also listed on the Financial Assistance Application. If the patient does not provide complete verification of income and assets within 30 days of the application, the request for aid through the Community Assistance Program may be rejected. Additionally, the patient may be required to apply for Medicaid prior to the hospital accepting the patient's application for services at a reduced cost. If approved for Medicaid, the patient will qualify for financial aid for any spend-down amount determined by the State.

Within two (2) business days following a patient's request for charity care services, application for Medical Assistance (Medicaid), or both, the hospital will make a conditional determination of probable eligibility.

Once appropriate verification of income has been provided, the patient's income shall be compared to the current published Federal Poverty Guidelines based on specific family size. If the patient's income is at/or below the appropriate amount on the table, financial assistance will be granted and tiered up to a 100% adjustment for the services rendered. Final determination of eligibility will be made based upon a complete and accurate application. Should insufficient information be provided, the Financial Counselor will contact the patient to obtain additional documentation. All applications will be acknowledged; patients will be contacted by telephone, if possible, and a follow up letter will be sent indicating the level at which the application was approved or the reason for denial.

Tiered adjustments based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines are as follows:

- Up to 200% of the Poverty Level = 100% Adjustment
- 201% to 250% above Poverty Level = 50% Adjustment
- 251% to 300% above Poverty Level = 25% Adjustment

The Federal Poverty Guidelines will be updated annually based on changes by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Once eligibility for financial aid has been established the period of eligibility shall include medical care for three months prior to and continue for up to six months

following the date of application. If a patient returns to UHCC for treatment during the six month eligibility period he/she may be asked to provide additional information to ensure that all eligibility criteria continue to be met.

Balances Eligible for Financial Assistance

All self pay balances, including self pay balances after insurance payments, are eligible for consideration for Financial Assistance with the following exceptions:

- Balances covered by health insurance
- Balances covered by a government or private program other than health insurance
- Balances for patients that would qualify for Medical Assistance but who do not apply
- Balances for patients who are not U.S. residents may be allowed after administrative review on a case-by-case basis.
- Balances on cosmetic surgery and other procedures that are considered elective and without which the patient's general health would not be adversely affected
- Balances for patients who falsify information on, or related to, the application

Public Notice

Information regarding the UHCC Financial Assistance Program will be made available to patients in the following ways:

- Brochures will be available at all registration points, financial counseling areas and outpatient areas
- Information will be posted on the hospital's web site
- Signs will be posted in visible areas at each registration site, including the E D
- A notice of availability of the program will be sent to each patient that receives a self-pay statement from UHCC.

Appendix 3:

Description of Hospital's Mission, Vision, and Value Statement(s)

The Union Hospital mission, vision, and values statement identifies the importance of providing safe, high-quality, personalized services conducted by professional, trained staff while demonstrating collaboration among all providers and prudent management of our resources.

It is the vision of Union hospital that the provision of services in this manner will result in our being the first choice for health care by community residents seeking superior quality services and personalized care in a convenient, cost-effective community setting.

Appendix 4:

Hospital's Mission, Vision, and Value Statement(s)

HOSPITAL MISSION

Our mission is to provide safe, high-quality health and wellness services to the residents of Cecil County and neighboring communities.

VISION

Residents throughout our market will turn first to Affinity Health Alliance for health care because we provide superior quality services and personalized care in a convenient, cost-effective community setting.

VALUES

- We will maintain operational excellence in the provision of high **quality** care in a safe environment.
- We are committed to providing **personalized service** treating patients and their families with compassion and superb care.
- We support the **personal and professional development** of our workforce.
- We seek **collaboration** with our staff, physicians, management, trustees, volunteers, partners, and the communities we serve.
- We **prudently manage our resources** to ensure the continuity of our services to the community.