

Charity Care Policy

Northwest Gastroenterology (NWG), PLLC, and Northwest Endoscopy Center (NWEC), LLC, recognize their obligations to serve all individuals in need of medical care, regardless of financial ability. No individual will be turned away from NWG/NWEC based on ability to pay.

Charity care is defined here as the amount of medical care (including but not limited to office visits and endoscopic procedures) provided at no cost to an individual who is unable to pay for some or all of the care. The average level of charity care locally is 1.08% of revenue. The goal of NWG/NWEC is to meet or exceed this level of charity care.

An individual obtaining medical care at NWG/NWEC can request charity care by contacting a Collections Specialist in our billing department; alternatively, the request can be discussed with the Provider of Service, who will notify the Collections Specialist. The request should be made as soon as possible, preferably before or at the time of service. All requests will be reviewed by the Collections Specialist and all charity care will be approved or denied by either the Provider of Service or the NWG/NWEC Medical Directors.

The amount of charity care approved by NWG/NWEC will be based on factors such as the individual's financial situation (income and net worth), any change in employment or health status, and/or co-existing medical bills from other health care organizations. Spousal factors will be considered if the individual is married. Parental factors will be considered for children under age 19 or full-time students still supported by parents or guardians. If an individual currently qualifies for Bridge Assistance via PeaceHealth, NWG/NWEC will automatically qualify the individual for charity care at NWG/NWEC.

In cases where an individual has not requested charity care but has an outstanding balance, the Collections Specialist may inform the individual about our charity care policy; however, accounts that have already been sent to our collection agency will not be considered for charity care. Documentation of successful and unsuccessful requests for charity care will be maintained in the Charity Care folder in the Business Services drive on the server. Patient unresponsiveness to the collection efforts will also be documented.

In addition to charity care, unpaid balances may be written off by the Provider of Service as bad debt. The billing office will make every effort to differentiate charity care from bad debt. If a patient has had an unpaid balance written off to bad debt but later makes a payment on the debt, the payment will be accepted; however, any subsequent payment on balances written off to charity care will not be accepted.