

Weber County Correctional Facility

Volume:

Inmate Health Care

Chapter:

JH 06 -MEDICAL CO-PAYMENT

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JH 06/01.00 GENERAL

JH 06/01.01 Purpose

JH 06/01.02 Cross Reference

JH 06/01.03 Definitions

JH 06/02.00 MEDICAL CO-PAYMENT

JH 06/02.01 Policy

JH 06/02.02 Rationale

JH 06/02.03 Procedure: Medical Co-Payment Training an Orientation

JH 06/02.04 Procedure: Accessibility

JH 06/02.05 Procedure: Complaints Regarding Medical Co-Payment Program

JH 06/02.06 Procedure: Medical Co-Payment Charges

JH 06/02.07 Procedure: Accounting for Medical Charges

JH 06/02.08 Procedure: Medical Transportation

JH 06/01.00 **GENERAL**

JH 06/01.01 **Purpose**

The Purpose of this chapter is to provide the policy, procedures, rational and other requirements for the inmate co-payment for medical services.

JH 06/01.02 **Cross Reference**

JGO3, Inmate Funds and Accounting
JDO6, Inmate Disciplinary
JHO5, Medical Custody Interface
JDO5, Inmate Grievances

JH 06/01.03 **Definitions**

inmate commissary account	account used to document all individual inmate financial activity
inmate financial system	electronic database software used to document inmate commissary account and inmate trust account transactions
inmate trust account	the Bank Account used to bank inmate cash account monies
Inmate Accounting Office	the WCCF unit responsible for the business and accounting functions of the WCCF
Nurse	a Registered nurse or Licensed Practical nurse, assigned to assess the level of care required for each inmate
WCCF Physician	the attending physician who administers medical treatment to inmates on a scheduled basis at the Weber County Correctional Facility and makes final medical judgments regarding the care provided to inmates
sick slip	a form used by inmates to request medical services, also known as the "Inmate Request for Medical Evaluation Form."

sick call	the system through which each inmate reports for and receives appropriate medical services for non-emergency illness or injury.
OTC	Over the counter (medications).
RME	a form used by inmates to request medical services, also known as a "sick slip".
Accounting Clerk	for the purpose of this policy, the staff member assigned the task of making and tracking the transactions related to Inmate Medical Co-payments, and Medical Charges Ledger.
Medical Service	for the purpose of this policy medical service shall mean, any medical, dental, or mental health service, unless otherwise stated in this policy.
Medication Pass (Med Pass)	the time medications are dispensed in the Housing Area by Medical Staff.
Medical Unit Charge Sheet (MCS)	that sheet used by the WCCF to record the medical service and initiate eligible inmate co-payment for medical service. It includes the inmates, name, DOB, name number and housing assignment.
MCS	Medical Unit Charge Sheet

JH 06/02.00 **MEDICAL CO-PAYMENT**

JH 06/02.01 **Policy**

It is the Policy of the WCCF that:

- A. payments by inmates for sick call services/medical co-payment program should be made utilizing the inmate financial system database;
- B. charges and payments are documented on an on-going basis so that monies are not lost or misplaced;
- C. the inmate financial system is designed to show the current status of appropriation and expenditures;
- D. the WCCF should periodically request, or be subject to, an independent annual audit of the Inmate Accounting Office utilizing standard accounting procedures, and have the status of that audit available;
- E. inmate personal funds held by the facility are controlled using acceptable accounting procedures;
- F. WCCF Accounting staff should debit an inmate's account for non-emergency medical services as provided by WCCF Policy and Procedure for medical co-payment; and inmates:
 - 1. will not be refused medical treatment for financial reasons;
 - 2. will not be charged for emergency treatment or follow-up visits initiated or ordered by a Medical Provider;
 - 3. may contest the validity of medical charges using the inmate grievance system;
 - 4. may request reasonable access to this medical co-payment policy and;
 - 5. shall be given orientation on medical co-payment during orientation and reception.

JH 06/02.02 **Rationale**

- A. The WCCF believes that inmates should have regular access to licensed health care professionals for assessment triage, and, as clinically indicated, treatment or referral of health care complaints.

- B. The WCCF has adopted a medical copayment program to reduce problems which existed in the following areas:
1. Inmates making sick call appointments to obtain over-the-counter pain relievers;
 2. Inmates making sick call appointments to break their jail routine and;
 3. Inmates making sick call appointments without a specific ailment.
- C. Unnecessary sick call appointments diminish medical personnel efforts to devote quality time/care to individuals who are truly in need of medical services. Inmates in the WCCF are allowed to purchase some over-the-counter (OTC) medications from the Jail Commissary. A significant number of inmates make sick call appointments just to ask for over-the-counter pain relievers. All of the above factors contribute to over taxing medical staff and medical budgets.
- D. Indigent inmates are allowed access to all aspects of medical service. A negative balance is entered in their Inmate Trust Account. It has been found that inmates are unwilling to pay for sick call unless they have a real need, thus reducing an unnecessary workload on medical staff.
- E. Implementing a medical co-pay program is meant to:
1. minimize frivolous sick call requests;
 2. help maintain professional health care;
 3. allow nurses to devote quality time to inmates; and
 4. teach inmates to be responsible.
- F. Free medical services may include:
1. Admissions medical services;
 2. Mental health screening;
 3. Medical emergencies and;
 4. Follow-up care initiated by Medical Staff.

- G. Medical care is never refused for an inmate.

JH 06/02.03 **Procedure: Medical Co-Payment Training and Orientation**

Staff Training

1. Staff should be trained concerning the purpose, functions, requirements, and policy and procedures of the Inmate Co-Payment program.
2. Medical and Inmate Accounting Office staff should receive training on the Inmate Co-payment Program. Thereafter, all medical and inmate accounting office staff should receive training concerning the Inmate Co-Payment program.

B. Inmate Orientation and Notice

1. New inmates shall receive information concerning the Inmate Co-Payment Program upon arriving at their reception and orientation housing unit.
2. Copies of this Policy and Electronic Inmate Handbook should be made available to inmates for their review during their incarceration at the WCCF.
3. Inmates should also receive assistance from the Medical Officer, Deputies, Housing Corporal, Housing Sergeant or Housing Lieutenant to:
 - a. review current procedure;
 - b. obtain necessary forms; or
 - c. receive instructions concerning how to access medical services at the WCCF.

JH 06/02.04 **Procedure: Accessibility**

- A. Inmates may access medical services as defined in WCCF policy JH 03, Screenings and Examinations and JH 04, Health Care Delivery.
- B. No inmate shall be refused access to medical services because of an inability to pay a copayment.

JH 06/02.05 **Procedure: Complaints Regarding Medical Co-Payment Program**

- A. In general all inmate complaints are grievable, except complaints against decisions and procedures of the disciplinary and classification as defined in WCCF policy JD 05, Inmate Grievances.
- B. Inmates have available to them the Inmate Grievance Procedure to pursue or resolve complaints regarding:
 - 1. allegations and complaints for co-payment charges; and
 - 2. allegations and complaints against medical services.
- C. The grievance procedures do not set any limit on existing administration discretion or powers. The scope of available administrative remedies is broad and should be applied on a case-by-case basis.

JH 06/02.06 **Procedure: Medical Co-Payment Charges**

- A. General
 - 1. Medical care for inmates is never refused. However some medical services are charged to the inmate.
 - 2. Free medical services are:
 - a. the admissions medical screening;
 - b. mental health screening;
 - c. medical emergencies and;
 - d. follow-up care initiated by medical staff.
 - e. referral from custody staff. Custody staff shall not refer inmates for medical care simply as a means for the inmate to avoid a co-payment.
 - 3. Medical staff determines when an emergency medical problem exists. If deemed an emergency, there is no charge.
- B. Charges for Medical Services
 - 1. Costs for non-emergency treatment are charged to an inmate as follows:

- a. Nurse sick call visit \$10.00
 - b. Doctor sick call visit \$10.00 (Unless referred by the nurse as a follow-up to the nurse sick call.)
 - A. Dentist visit \$10.00 (Unless referred by the Doctor or Nurse following their sick call.)
 - d. Prescription Processing Fee \$ 3.00
- 2. Non-emergency visits to any sick call will be charged at the amount described above. However, once the charge of the initial co-payment is made for the requested service no further charge will be made when the Corrections Nurse refers the patient to the Doctor for evaluation or treatment.
 - 3. Non-prescription medications provided by the facility are charged to the inmate and do not exceed commissary prices.

JH 06/02.07 **Procedure: Accounting for Medical Charges**

A. Posting Medical Charges

- 1. At the conclusion of each sick call visit the nurse completes a Medical Unit Charge Sheet (MCS). The inmate signs this form and receives a copy. If the inmate refuses to sign, a staff member shall sign in the inmate's place as a witness.
- 2. The original completed MCS is given to the Medical Records Clerk by the nurse when sick call is completed.
- 3. The original MCS is placed in the inmate's medical file by the Medical Records Clerk.

B. Accounting

- 1. Upon receiving a copy of the MCS, the Medical Records Clerk:
 - a. enters each charge under the appropriate inmate's name in the inmate financial system;
 - b. discards of the copy of the MCS, as the original is available in the medical office.

2. The Accounting office shall disperse the medical charges collected on a monthly basis, in the form of a check, and deposit these funds with the Weber County Treasurer.

C. Unpaid Balance

1. When an inmate does not have the funds to pay the co-payment, the unpaid balance will create an accounts payable in the commissary system.
2. When an inmate is released from custody with an unpaid balance on his commissary account, the unpaid balance will remain as an accounts payable.
3. If an inmate re-enters the custody of the WCCF, the charges will be deducted from monies entered into the Inmate Trust Account, to pay the outstanding balance.

JH 06/02.08 **Procedure: Medical Transportation**

- A. Transportation in the event of an emergency shall not be charged to the inmate.
- B. The transporting of an inmate for the purpose of examination by his own private physician/dentist, including worker's compensation or insurance, will create a charge to the inmate. The examination must have the approval of the WCCF doctor.
- C. Transportation arrangements should be coordinated by the Medical Unit and the Transportation Sergeant.
 1. Scheduled transports should be accomplished by the WCCF transportation unit.
 2. Unscheduled or emergency transports may be accomplished by WCCF staff as assigned.