

# Health care available for needy

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Eligibility is limited to applicants whose total gross family income isn't double the current federal poverty level. As defined by the federal register, this means the most a single person could earn in a year is \$7,580 to qualify. The maximum earnings for a family of six would be \$19,780.

The other four hospitals in Oakland County where Hill-Burton funds are available are Pontiac General, St. Joseph Mercy, Crittenton and William Beaumont.

EACH HOSPITAL administers the program differently. Botsford makes Hill-Burton funds available to patients "when all other forms of medical coverage are exhausted," said Jack Duffy, director of patient accounts at Botsford.

"It comes after Blue Cross, after Medicare and Medicaid are paid," Duffy said. "If there are still balances owing, then people are considered for Hill-Burton."

"But a person wouldn't apply for Hill-Burton assistance if they have valid medical coverage."

Persons who think they might qualify for such assistance and know they'll require medical treatment, such as ob-

stetrics, in 1982 should contact Duffy or the financial counselor at Botsford Hospital.

Verification of income in the form of paychecks, unemployment benefits and Social Security payments is required of all applicants.

Single persons working part time, earning \$600 monthly, for instance, would be ineligible for county medical assistance, which limits earnings to \$3,000 in most instances. But such individuals would qualify under the Hill-Burton plan because their total earnings wouldn't exceed twice the federal poverty standard, or \$7,580 per year.

THE PROGRAM is offered through the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, formerly the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Persons who think they were unfairly denied consideration under the Hill-Burton uncompensated care program can make a toll-free phone call to the department by calling 1-800-638-0742.

Howard Rosso, director of the Oakland County Dept. of Social Services, said there's a real need for free health care, judging from the sharp increase in the number of persons applying for all kinds of assistance.

More than 10,000 Oakland County residents per month, Rosso said, are applying for county assistance, compared to 8,000 applicants in October 1979. Last month 58 percent of all applicants were approved for some form of financial aid.

During fiscal year 1979-80, Rosso said, the county administered \$51,314,000 in medical-care funds, and of that amount \$14,325,000 went for general hospital treatment. The remainder was spent on outpatient services, nursing-home care, dentistry and pharmacy costs.

MANY COUNTY ASSISTANCE funds require repayment for health care if the individual is able to earn a decent wage. No repayment is required under the Hill-Burton plan.

"In those hospitals with Hill-Burton obligations — providing the hospital has not spent all the money (set aside) in the participating year, the patient often has a choice of using county assistance or Hill-Burton funds," Rosso said.

"As far as the patient's concerned, if Hill-Burton is available it's preferred because it's not reimbursable. So it's to the patient's benefit to get Hill-Burton (funds) if possible."



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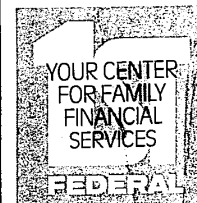
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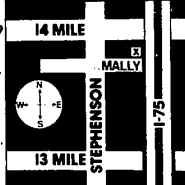
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