

## **Who Qualifies for Charity Care?**

Little Company's charity care policy mirrors much of the Illinois Community Benefit Act, which began in late 2003. We serve the health needs of all in the Catholic tradition as we strive to enhance the sacredness of life and human dignity. We provide quality health services to individuals in need regardless of age, gender, geographic location, cultural background, physical mobility or ability to pay.

"Charity Care" is defined as care provided by a health care provider for which the provider does not pursue payment from the patient. People without any kind of insurances, or "self-pay" as we call them, are eligible for charity care if their income is less than 600 percent of the poverty guideline, i.e. \$88,200 for a family of four. A charity care adjustment can range from a 68 percent discount to completely free hospital care. We extend charity care to not only those who request charity for themselves, but we actively determine those patients who have a charitable need. To better inform patients about the availability of charity care, we display signs in our public registration areas informing people about how to apply for assistance. We also added this information to our billing statements. In addition, our financial counselors attempt to seek out those patients who are unemployed to begin assisting them with their bills.

During fiscal year 2009 the Hospital wrote off to charity care charges, for which we did not pursue payment, of \$18,296,139, which represented 9.8% of the Hospital's net revenues. Charity care is just one component of the community benefit services we provide. The Illinois Community Benefits Act (PA 93-0480) was enacted on August 8, 2003, and requires certain non-profit hospitals to file several types of reports with the Attorney General's office. The most recent Community Benefits Plan Report states that Little Company provided \$34,011,070, which is a combined figure for: charity care, language assistance services, government-sponsored indigent health care, volunteer services, subsidized health services, bad debt and other community benefits.

###

*Updated December 2009*