

HOUSE BILL 1204

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By: **Delegates Nathan-Pulliam, Benson, Bromwell, Hubbard, Oaks,
Pena-Melnyk, Riley, and Tarrant**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2009

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Hospitals – Financial Assistance Policy and Financial Assistance Application**
3 **– Notices**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring each hospital to provide every patient with a written
5 notice that contains certain information about the hospital’s financial assistance
6 policy and the availability of a certain financial assistance application; requiring
7 the notice to be made available in certain languages; specifying certain locations
8 in which a certain notice must be posted in a hospital; and generally relating to
9 notices about hospital financial assistance policies and financial assistance
10 applications.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
12 Article – Health – General
13 Section 19–214.1(a), (c), and (d)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
17 Article – Health – General
18 Section 19–214.1(b)
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

21 BY repealing
22 Article – Health – General
23 Section 19–214.1(e)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

26 BY adding to

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – Health – General
2 Section 19–214.1(e)
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

5 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
6 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

7 **Article – Health – General**

8 19–214.1.

9 (a) Each hospital in the State shall develop a financial assistance policy for
10 providing free and reduced–cost care to low–income patients who lack health care
11 coverage.

12 (b) A hospital shall post a notice in conspicuous places throughout the
13 hospital, **INCLUDING THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, BILLING OFFICE,**
14 **ADMISSIONS OFFICE, AND OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENTS,** describing the financial
15 assistance policy and how to apply for free and reduced–cost care.

16 (c) The Commission shall:

17 (1) Develop a uniform financial assistance application; and

18 (2) Require each hospital to use the uniform financial assistance
19 application to determine eligibility for free and reduced–cost care under the hospital’s
20 financial assistance policy.

21 (d) The uniform financial assistance application:

22 (1) Shall be written in simplified language; and

23 (2) May not require documentation that presents an undue barrier to
24 a patient’s receipt of financial assistance.

25 [(e) Each hospital shall establish a mechanism to provide the uniform
26 financial assistance application to patients who do not indicate public or private
27 health care coverage.]

28 **(E) (1) EACH HOSPITAL SHALL PROVIDE EVERY PATIENT WITH A**
29 **WRITTEN NOTICE THAT CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOSPITAL’S**
30 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AND THE AVAILABILITY OF THE FINANCIAL**
31 **ASSISTANCE APPLICATION.**

32 **(2) THE NOTICE SHALL INCLUDE:**

1 (I) **INFORMATION ABOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL**
2 **ASSISTANCE; AND**

3 (II) **CONTACT INFORMATION FOR A HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE**
4 **OR OFFICE FROM WHICH THE PATIENT MAY OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION**
5 **ABOUT THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**
6 **APPLICATION.**

7 (3) **THE NOTICE SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH,**
8 **SPANISH, AND ANY OTHER LANGUAGE COMMON IN THE HOSPITAL SERVICE**
9 **AREA.**

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 July 1, 2009.