

RCW 70.48.130 Emergency or necessary medical and health care for confined persons—Reimbursement procedures—Conditions—Limitations.

(1) It is the intent of the legislature that all jail inmates receive appropriate and cost-effective emergency and necessary medical care. Governing units, the health care authority, and medical care providers shall cooperate to achieve the best rates consistent with adequate care.

(2) Payment for emergency or necessary health care shall be by the governing unit, except that the health care authority shall directly reimburse the provider pursuant to chapter 74.09 RCW, in accordance with the rates and benefits established by the authority, if the confined person is eligible under the authority's medical care programs as authorized under chapter 74.09 RCW. After payment by the authority, the financial responsibility for any remaining balance, including unpaid client liabilities that are a condition of eligibility or participation under chapter 74.09 RCW, shall be borne by the medical care provider and the governing unit as may be mutually agreed upon between the medical care provider and the governing unit. In the absence of mutual agreement between the medical care provider and the governing unit, the financial responsibility for any remaining balance shall be borne equally between the medical care provider and the governing unit. Total payments from all sources to providers for care rendered to confined persons eligible under chapter 74.09 RCW shall not exceed the amounts that would be paid by the authority for similar services provided under Title XIX medicaid, unless additional resources are obtained from the confined person.

(3) For inpatient, outpatient, and ancillary services for confined persons that are not paid by the medicaid program pursuant to subsection (2) of this section, unless other rates are agreed to by the governing unit and the hospital, providers of hospital services that are hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW must accept as payment in full by the governing units the applicable facility's percent of allowed charges rate or fee schedule as determined, maintained, and posted by the Washington state department of labor and industries pursuant to chapter 51.04 RCW.

(4) As part of the screening process upon booking or preparation of an inmate into jail, general information concerning the inmate's ability to pay for medical care shall be identified, including insurance or other medical benefits or resources to which an inmate is entitled. The inmate may also be evaluated for medicaid eligibility and, if deemed potentially eligible, enrolled in medicaid. This information shall be made available to the authority, the governing unit, and any provider of health care services. To the extent that federal law allows, a jail or the jail's designee is authorized to act on behalf of a confined person for purposes of applying for medicaid.

(5) The governing unit or provider may obtain reimbursement from the confined person for the cost of health care services not provided under chapter 74.09 RCW, including reimbursement from any insurance program or from other medical benefit programs available to the confined person. Nothing in this chapter precludes civil or criminal remedies to recover the costs of medical care provided jail inmates or paid for on behalf of inmates by the governing unit. As part of a judgment and sentence, the courts are authorized to order defendants to repay all or part of the medical costs incurred by the governing unit or provider during confinement.

(6) To the extent that a confined person is unable to be financially responsible for medical care and is ineligible for the authority's medical care programs under chapter 74.09 RCW, or for coverage from private sources, and in the absence of an interlocal agreement or other contracts to the contrary, the governing unit may obtain reimbursement for the cost of such medical services from the unit of government whose law enforcement officers initiated the charges on which the person is being held in the jail: PROVIDED, That reimbursement for the cost of such services shall be by the state for state prisoners being held in a jail who are accused of either escaping from a state facility or of committing an offense in a state facility.

(7) There shall be no right of reimbursement to the governing unit from units of government whose law enforcement officers initiated the charges for which a person is being held in the jail for care provided after the charges are disposed of by sentencing or otherwise, unless by intergovernmental agreement pursuant to chapter 39.34 RCW.

(8) Under no circumstance shall necessary medical services be denied or delayed because of disputes over the cost of medical care or a determination of financial responsibility for payment of the costs of medical care provided to confined persons.

(9) Nothing in this section shall limit any existing right of any party, governing unit, or unit of government against the person receiving the care for the cost of the care provided. [2015 c 267 § 8; 2011 1st sp.s. c 15 § 85; 1993 c 409 § 1; (2007 c 259 § 66 expired June 30, 2009); 1986 c 118 § 9; 1977 ex.s. c 316 § 13.]

Effective date—Findings—Intent—Report—Agency transfer—References to head of health care authority—Draft legislation—2011 1st sp.s. c 15: See notes following RCW 74.09.010.

Expiration date—2007 c 259 § 66: "Section 66 of this act expires June 30, 2009." [2007 c 259 § 76.]

Severability—Subheadings not law—2007 c 259: See notes following RCW 41.05.033.

Effective date—1993 c 409: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [May 15, 1993]." [1993 c 409 § 2.]

Severability—1977 ex.s. c 316: See note following RCW 70.48.020.