

**RESOLUTION NO. 1198 -2013, ESTABLISHING NEW FEE
POLICY FOR COUNTY HEALTH CENTERS**

WHEREAS, the County of Suffolk operates a network of health centers which provide primary health care for medically underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, the County's health centers generally provide care to low income residents who qualify for Medicaid or who have no medical insurance; and

WHEREAS, the County's longstanding policy was to charge patients presenting without health insurance a co-payment determined by an income-based sliding scale; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health Services instituted a policy in June 2011 which requires patients lacking health insurance to prove that they were denied Medicaid coverage based on income; in the absence of such proof, patients must pay the maximum \$75 sliding scale fee; and

WHEREAS, many persons who have incomes that do not meet Medicaid income guidelines fail to obtain denial letters because they are unable to produce required documents to commence a case determination; and

WHEREAS, Health Services' policy has resulted in an overall 30% decrease in total patient visits to the County's health centers with a 50% reduction at one health center; and

WHEREAS, the policy adopted by the Department of Health Services prevents the County from meeting its mission to deliver affordable primary health care services to underserved populations; and

WHEREAS, residents who cannot easily afford a \$75 co-pay sometimes postpone necessary preventative care which leads to more serious illnesses later on; and

WHEREAS, residents who fail to receive care at the County's health centers often end up receiving costly treatment at hospital emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, the County of Suffolk should reinstitute a policy that evaluates the patient's sliding fee scale payment solely on income and ability to pay; now, therefore be it

1st RESOLVED, that the Department of Health Services is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to charge uninsured persons presenting for treatment and care at the County's health centers, a fee to be determined by the patient's annual income and family size according to the most recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Guidelines, modified to account for the cost of living in Suffolk County; and be it further

2nd RESOLVED, that the Department of Health Services shall not determine or base a patient's fee on their ability or inability to prove that they were denied coverage by Medicaid; and be it further

3rd **RESOLVED**, that the Department of Health Services will implement the policy set forth herein within 30 days of the effective date of this resolution; and be it further

4th **RESOLVED**, that the Department of Health Services shall provide Medicaid applications to patients who present at County health centers without Medicaid coverage, and further, will explore the feasibility of entering into agreements with Medicaid HMO/managed care providers to establish outreach offices at the County's health centers to allow their employees to assist patients with their Medicaid applications; and be it further

5th **RESOLVED**, that the terms of this resolution shall apply only to those health centers operating under Suffolk County's Public Health Law Article 28 licenses; and be it further

6th **RESOLVED**, that this Legislature, being the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) lead agency, hereby finds and determines that this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to Section 617.5(c)(20), (21) and (27) of Title 6 of the NEW YORK CODE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS (6 NYCRR) and within the meaning of Section 8-0109(2) of the NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW as a promulgation of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, and legislative decisions in connection with continuing agency administration, management and information collection, and the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is hereby directed to circulate any appropriate SEQRA notices of determination of non-applicability or non-significance in accordance with this resolution.

DATED: December 17, 2013

EFFECTIVE PURSUANT TO SECTION 2-15(F) OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY CHARTER,
RETURNED BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE UNSIGNED JANUARY 2, 2014