



**HARRIS COUNTY
HOSPITAL DISTRICT**

**PATIENT ELIGIBILITY
SERVICES
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Policy No: 4.01
Page Number: 1 of 6

Effective Date: 08/01/02
Revised Date: 02/23/07
Approved By:

TITLE: VERIFYING HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

PURPOSE: To define the persons counted in the household for purposes of calculating the amount of financial assistance from HCHD and the verifications that may be used to substantiate the household.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Clients applying for financial assistance are required to declare and provide verification to identify all family members living in the household. Household composition is the basis for determining what income is included when calculating a client's level of financial assistance.

POLICY ELABORATION:

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Adult: A person at least 18 years of age or a younger person who is or has been married or has had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.
- B. Common Law Marriage: A form of marriage recognized as legal in the state of Texas. To be considered common-law married, both parties must be free to marry, live together, and hold out to the public that they are man and wife.
- C. Managing Conservator: A person designated by a court to have daily legal responsibility for a minor.
- D. Minor child: A person up to and including the month of the nineteenth birthday or has not been married and has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.



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II. IDENTIFYING HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

A. A household is defined as:

1. A person living alone.
2. Two or more persons living together who are legally responsible for support of the other person.

B. Legal responsibility for support exists between:

1. Persons who are married (including common-law married).
2. A legal parent and a minor child.
3. A managing conservator and a minor child.
4. A guardian and the ward of the guardian.

C. The following are considered one-person households:

1. An adult living with others who are not legally responsible for supporting the client.
2. An adult living alone.
3. A minor child living alone or with others who are not responsible for the child's support.



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D. The following persons living together are considered to be household groups:

1. Two persons legally married to each other.
2. One or both parents and their minor children (including unborn children).
3. A managing conservator and a minor child and the conservator's spouse and other minor children, if any.
4. Minor children who are siblings, when not living with parents or a managing conservator.
5. An adult between ages 19 and 23 who is a full-time student and relies on the family for support will be counted as part of the family's household so long as the student retains full-time status.

E. Separate households:

1. Adults living together who do not have legal responsibility for support and who are not married or common-law married are not considered a household. Each individual is considered a separate household.
2. A full-time student who is self-supporting.
3. A married couple living in another household is considered to be a separate household.



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III. VERIFYING RELATIONSHIPS

- A. The relationship between all members of the household must be documented the first time the family applies for and is granted financial assistance.
- B. No verification is required when the client declares in a written application for financial assistance that another person living in the household is not a family member or a dependent person.
- C. No verification is required to prove a couple is married.
- D. The following documents are acceptable to verify household composition:
 - 1. Birth certificate showing the names of parent and child.
 - 2. Baptismal record showing names of parent and child.
 - 3. IRS 1040 form from most recent tax year showing names of dependents claimed on the tax return.
 - 4. Social Security Award letter with dependent's names.
 - 5. School documents (report cards, transcripts, etc.) showing names of parent and child.
 - 6. Insurance documents showing names of parent and child.
 - 7. U.S. Immigration applications with dependents' names listed.



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8. Divorce decree or child support decree (with judge's signature and/or page number and volume stamped by courthouse personnel).
 9. For infants under 90 days old, the baby's Popras form, birth fact record, or hospital armband.
 10. Proof of school enrollment for students aged 18 to 23 who are claimed as dependents.
 11. Any reasonable document which shows the parent/child (or guardian/child) relationship.
- E. A patient's statement of household composition will be accepted *one time only*, if the patient provides a reasonable explanation of why verification documents are not available or readily acceptable (e.g., births outside U.S., divorce outside Texas). Managers must approve the financial assistance classification. The patient will be provided with a list of acceptable verifications and will be required to verify household composition upon renewing the financial assistance classification.

IV. VERIFYING CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

- A. Upon renewal, the client must provide verification of any change in household composition (e.g., providing school enrollment documents for an adult child, a birth certificate for a newborn, or documents substantiating a separation or divorce from a spouse).
- B. A client who indicates he is separated from a spouse should complete question 16 on form 280478, "Application for Financial Assistance".



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The client should also provide proof that the spouse is no longer living in the household (e.g., an apartment lease listing the client and not the spouse, or legal documents showing the filing for legal separation or divorce). Patient Eligibility management at the supervisor level or above may approve the client's answer to question 16 on the Application for Assistance when the client asserts that no other proof of the separation exists.

- C. A client who indicates he has divorced a spouse since the last time household composition was established must provide a copy of the divorce decree.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

County Indigent Health Care Program Manual, Section 2

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Patient Eligibility Services
Administration

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