

Reducing Application Barriers for Medical Financial Assistance in Sweetwater County, Wyoming

Emma Miller | RUOP III | 2024 | UW School of Medicine



Hypothesis

If a document is created to simplify the application process to medical financial assistance programs, then total financial burden will be reduced for an increased number of patients.

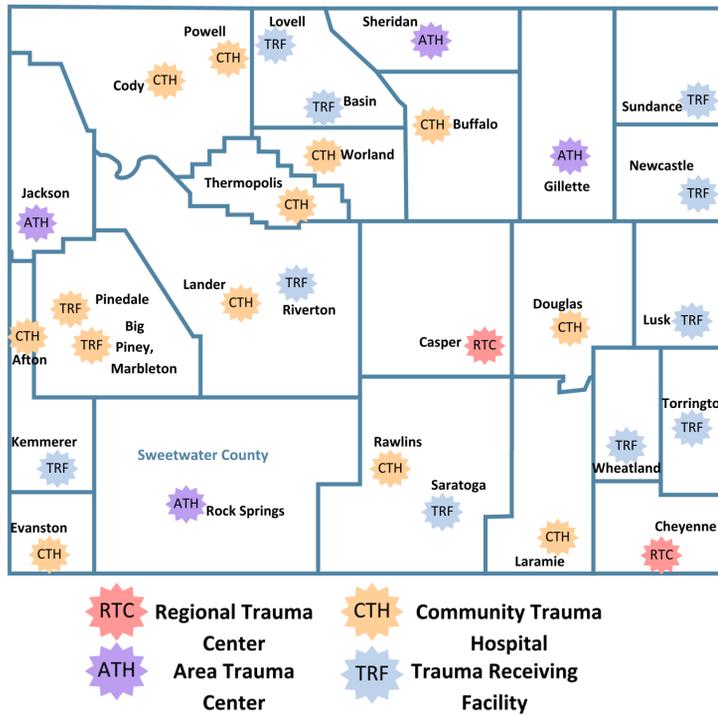


Figure 1: The location of Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County in Rock Springs, WY in comparison to other hospital systems.

Background – Sweetwater County	Statistics
Population	41,250
Speaks English as a Second Language	10% of the population
Population Living in Poverty	13%
Uninsured Population (under 65)	16%
Primary Medical Facility	Memorial Hospital
Specialty Services Available at MHSC	Oncology and Dialysis Centers

Literature Review

- 2022 Needs Assessment for Sweetwater County identified **cost of medical care as the primary barrier to community members accessing care.**
- Medical Assistance Program (MAP) in CO serving similar patient populations (200% - 300% FPL) reported:
 - At baseline >60% of participants avoided medical care due to cost, following MAP enrollment statistic dropped to <40%
 - Improved follow-up related health outcomes. (ex: increased reports of patients filling prescriptions.)
- Cancer patients have significant risk for financial toxicity, MAPs alleviate burden:
 - 95% of clients in one study recommend a MAP and report better quality of life.
- Retrospective cohort studies show nonprofit hospitals with higher levels of community benefit spending have lower levels of readmission (difference of 1.2% in readmission rate, 95% CI - 1.85 to -0.56; P < 0.001).
- In 2017 Oncology Navigators identified **barriers to resources** as a major proponent in dissuading patient participation in MAPs.



Figure 2: QR Link to Page One of Memorial Hospital's Medical Assistance Program Application. (Please scan with your smartphone camera.)

Deliverables to Community

- Memorial Hospital operates an established MAP
 - Primary concerns: exceptional need within the community, inadequate staff for volume, detailed documentation required in MAP application.
- In the hopes of reducing barriers and increasing total completed applications, the "How To Guide" was developed.



Hello!

We understand that trying to balance medical care and financial demands can feel overwhelming. We are here to assist you and support you through the process. The following pages will help you as you put together your application for the Medical Assistance Program.

This document is going to give you a few pieces of information:

- What documents/evidence you need for the application**
- Where you can get these documents: website, phone number, or general institution**
- Resources that are available in Sweetwater County to help you as you apply**



Figure 3: QR Link to complete How To Guide (Please scan with your smartphone camera.)

Application Documents:

Document I. Your most recently completed tax return and associated documents, one of these combinations:

- If you are **NOT** on Social Security: your most recent income tax return (1040) and the associated W2 forms.
- If you are **ONLY ON** Social Security (no other streams of income): your most recent 1099 and your Award Benefit Letter from Social Security.
- If you are **ON** Social Security **AND** file taxes on other streams of income: your most recent 1099, Award Benefit Letter from Social Security, *and* tax returns from other streams of income.

Figure 4: An Introduction to The Guide and an example of document guidance.

Next Steps

- Upon approval, the "How To Guide" will be included with the MAP Application.
 - A link to the Guide pdf will be provided on the Patient Financial Navigator Services website.
 - Patients alerted via email that they are eligible for the MHSC MAP will also receive a copy of the Guide in the initial MAP email.

Where Do I Get These?

Individual Tax Return/1040:

Online: at irs.gov [follow [this](#) link or from the irs.gov homepage select 'Get your tax record' and then select 'Sign in to your online account']

By Phone: IRS Transcript Helpline 1-800-908-9946

W2 Form: This is a document provided by your employer. If you do not know where your W2 is and cannot contact your employer, the Social Security Administration can provide copies of your W2 Form (there may be \$126 filing fee. Please visit [SSA](https://ssa.gov) or ssa.gov FAQ for more information.)

The 1099 AND Social Security Benefit Letter: Both the 1099 and Social Security Benefit Letter can be found in same place.

Online: at ssa.gov [follow [this link](#) for tax return and [this link](#) for Social Security Benefit Letter. Or, from the ssa.gov home page click "get tax form" and then select 'log into My Account' to access 1099 and award benefit letter.]