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WEB SITE COMPARES HOSPITAL CHARITY CARE AND DISCOUNT PAYMENT POLICIES
IMPROVES ACCESS TO CARE AND PROVIDES CONSUMERS REAL CHOICE

SACRAMENTO – Consistent with Governor Schwarzenegger's efforts to increase access to healthcare and improve consumers' ability to exercise choice, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) today launched a new online database allowing the public to search and compare the charity care and discount payment policies of hospitals across the state.

"We know of only one other state, New York, which offers consumers the ability to shop and compare every hospital's charity care or discount payment policies," said OSHPD Director Dr. David Carlisle. "Not only will this help uninsured and underinsured patients gain access to charity and discounted care at hospitals, but it will help patient advocates, family members, clinics, and community organizations help consumers find affordable services."

California law requires every hospital to have a charity care and discount payment program. OSHPD increases public awareness and access to these programs by posting every California hospitals' policies and applications on the website. In addition to the polices and applications, the website includes information on a specific contact at the hospital for assistance and income levels eligible for free care or discounted charges.

Consumers can easily search by hospital name, address, city, county or zip code, access the policy information and download applications to apply for these services.

While each hospital will have a different policy and may evaluate financial criteria differently, in general, patients who have minimal or no health insurance may be eligible for discounted or free healthcare services if:
▪ Their income is below 350% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently $72,275 for a family of four), and
▪ They do not have health insurance of any kind, or have health insurance coverage, but their medical costs were more than 10% of their family's income in the last year.

Rural hospitals may set eligibility standards below 350% of the Federal Poverty Level.

The Web site can be accessed at www.oshpd.ca.gov/fairpricing

OSHPD's vision is "Equitable Healthcare Accessibility for California." One of 12 departments within California's Health and Human Services Agency, OSHPD is a leader nationwide in analyzing the state's healthcare infrastructure, promoting a diverse and culturally competent

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"Equitable Healthcare Accessibility for California"

healthcare workforce, informing the public about healthcare quality, ensuring the safety of buildings used to provide healthcare, insuring loans to develop healthcare facilities and facilitating the development of sustained capacity for communities to address healthcare issues.

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