

# VERMONT LEGAL AID, INC.

## OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

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July 26, 2019

Tristan Glanville, Interim CFO  
Northwestern Medical Center  
133 Fairfield Street  
St. Albans, VT 05478

Re: HCA Review of Northwestern Medical Center's Financial Assistance Policy

Dear Tristan Glanville:

Each year, the Office of the Health Care Advocate (HCA) hears from Vermonters who need medical care and who don't have adequate health insurance coverage. Many of our clients receive valuable supports from hospital Financial Assistance Policies (FAPs). Robust FAPs are a core part of the mission of Vermont's nonprofit hospitals and they are crucial for vulnerable Vermonters.

We know hospitals take pride in their FAPs and in providing care to Vermonters who are in need of this support. We are hoping to collaborate with you to ensure that your FAP is understandable and accessible for Vermonters and that it is in compliance with federal requirements. Our goal is to better support Vermonters in making informed decisions about accessing and paying for care at your hospital.

As part of our statutory duty to represent the interests of Vermont health care consumers, we reviewed your hospital's FAP and related materials in comparison to the minimum standards in federal regulations. We have enclosed the results of our review. We hope that this review is useful to your organization. We are asking NMC to engage in these improvements with the HCA. We would be happy to meet with you if that would be helpful.

We understand that hospital budget season is a particularly busy time of year. We are not asking for full resolution of the issues we are raising in the context of the budget process. We are asking for a commitment to address these issues before the end of the calendar year. We would like to be able to acknowledge such a commitment at the hospital budget hearing. NMC's FAP is crucial to Vermonters accessing care in times of financial hardship. We appreciate your attention to this and we look forward to collaborating with you. Please feel free to contact us at [hcapolicystaff@vtlegalaid.org](mailto:hcapolicystaff@vtlegalaid.org) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

\s Eric Schultheis, Ph.D., Esq.  
Staff Attorney  
Office of the Health Care Advocate

\s Julia Shaw, MPH  
Health Care Policy Analyst  
Office of the Health Care Advocate