



# OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

## Office for Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW.  
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[www.hhs.gov/ocr](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr)

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSURANCE PROVISIONS OF THE HILL-BURTON ACT

## What is the Hill-Burton Act?

The Hill-Burton Act authorizes assistance to public and other nonprofit medical facilities. These include acute care general hospitals, special hospitals, nursing homes, public health centers and rehabilitation facilities.

The Community Service Assurance under Title VI of the Public Health Service Act requires recipients of Hill-Burton funds to make non-emergency services, which are provided by the facility, available to any person residing in the Hill-Burton facility's service area without regard to race, color, national origin, creed or any ground other than the ability to pay or the ability of the facility to provide the needed services. However, facilities that receive Hill-Burton funds must make emergency services available to any person residing in the Hill-Burton facility's service area, without regard to the person's ability to pay.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), enforces the Community Service Assurance provisions of Hill-Burton.

## How does Hill-Burton protect us?

### Under Hill-Burton Community Service Assurance obligations, facilities must:

- Provide needed non-emergency services to any person residing in the Hill-Burton facility's service area without regard to race, color, national origin, creed or any ground other than ability to pay or the ability of the facility to provide the needed services.
- Participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs (unless ineligible to do so).
- Post notices in English and Spanish, informing the public of its community service obligations. (If 10 percent or more of the households in the service area usually speak a language other than English or Spanish, the facility must translate the notice into that language and post it as well).
- Not deny emergency services to any person residing in the facility's service area on the grounds that the person is unable to pay for those services.
- Not adopt patient admissions policies that have the effect of excluding persons seeking non-emergency services on grounds of race, color, national origin, creed or any otherground unrelated to the patient's need and ability to pay for the service or the availability of the needed service.

## How to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

If you believe that you or someone else has been discriminated against by an entity receiving Hill-Burton funds, you or your legal representative may file a complaint with OCR. Complaints must be filed within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.

You may send a written complaint or you may complete and send OCR the Complaint Form available on our webpage at [www.hhs.gov/ocr](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr). The complaint form is also available on our webpage in a number of other languages under the Civil Rights Information in Other Languages section.

The following information must be included:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- You must sign your name on everything you write. If you file a complaint on someone's behalf — e.g. spouse, friend, client, etc. — include your name, address, telephone number, and statement of your relationship to that person.
- Name and address of the institution or agency you believe discriminated.
- When, how and why you believe discrimination occurred.
- Any other relevant information.

If you mail the complaint, be sure to send it to the attention of the regional manager at the appropriate OCR regional office. OCR has ten regional offices and each regional office covers specific states. Complaints may also be mailed to OCR Headquarters at the following address:

**Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW.  
H.H.H. Building, Room 509-F  
Washington, D.C. 20201**

**To learn more:**

**Visit us online at [www.hhs.gov/ocr](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr)**

**Call us toll-free at 1-800-368-1019**

**Email us: [ocrmail@hhs.gov](mailto:ocrmail@hhs.gov)**

**TDD: 1-800-537-7697**

Language assistance services for OCR matters are available and provided free of charge. OCR services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

**[www.hhs.gov/ocr](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr)**