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**DATE:** *April 24, 2019*

**MCHD'S HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPROVED FOR EXPANSION**

CONROE – Montgomery County Hospital District is pleased to announce the expansion of its Health Care Assistance Program or HCAP. MCHD's Board of Directors voted to approve the plan at Tuesday's regular board meeting. The new plan will allow HCAP to accept a larger number of applicants by altering several of the factors for determining eligibility.

The four major changes to HCAP eligibility include increasing the income guideline from 133% of the federal poverty income level to 150%, increasing the existing vehicle exemption, eliminating prescription drug co-pays and adding medically-necessary Bi-Pap as a covered therapy within the program.

MCHD HCAP Manager Adeolu Moronkeji is proud the Board of Directors approved the expansion plan.

"These changes work toward our goal of providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place for HCAP clients," Moronkeji said. "Our overall goal is to ensure they have access to the best healthcare possible to improve their well-being."

HCAP's current plan covers up to 133% of the federal poverty income level which is \$1,385 a month for an individual. The new plan would cover 150% which is \$1,562 for the same individual. This will allow HCAP to greater assist lower-income residents who currently fall in a healthcare coverage gap between HCAP and Medicaid.

The increased threshold for the vehicle exemption will allow coverage for someone whose only asset may be their car. HCAP employees found some applicants were previously turned away because of an automobile that had retained its value.

The new plan also eliminates the \$7.50-\$12.50 co-pays (depending on medication types) on the three covered medications for HCAP clients. This frees up additional income for other household or medical expenses.



Lastly, the new plan provides coverage for medically-necessary Bi-Pap therapy. On the current plan, clients who were no longer benefiting from C-Pap therapy would have a weeks-long wait to be approved for Bi-Pap therapy. This eliminates the additional approval and waiting period.

HCAP's expansion plan will take effect June 1, 2019.

MCHD Board Chairman Mark Cole, Position 1 At-Large, agrees these changes were needed to greater care for lower-income residents of Montgomery County.

"These are giant steps forward," Cole said. "My personal [take] is this is the beginning of radical improvements to the program."

The MCHD Board also approved the funding for a pilot program to offer rides to medical appointments or a pharmacy for HCAP clients who do not have other access to a vehicle or driver. This program is still in the planning stages and will not be implemented until further Board approval.

**Montgomery County Hospital District's** mission is to care for the indigent and provide EMS services while protecting the interest of taxpayers and ensuring long-term stability through fund development. For more information about MCHD, please go to [www.mchd-tx.org](http://www.mchd-tx.org).