RCW 70.170.020 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

(1) "Charity care" means medically necessary hospital health care rendered to indigent persons when third-party coverage, if any, has been exhausted, to the extent that the persons are unable to pay for the care or to pay deductibles or coinsurance amounts required by a third-party payer, as determined by the department.

(2) "Department" means department of health.

(3) "Hospital" means any health care institution which is required to qualify for a license under *RCW 70.41.020(8); or as a behavioral health hospital under chapter 71.12 RCW.

(4) "Indigent persons" are those patients or their guarantors who qualify for charity care pursuant to RCW 70.170.060(5) based on the federal poverty level, adjusted for family size, and who have exhausted any third-party coverage.

(5) "Secretary" means secretary of health.

(6) "Special studies" means studies which have not been funded through the department's biennial or other legislative appropriations.

(7) "Third-party coverage" means an obligation on the part of an insurance company, health care service contractor, health maintenance organization, group health plan, government program, tribal health benefits, or health care sharing ministry as defined in 26 U.S.C. Sec. 5000A to pay for the care of covered patients and services, and may include settlements, judgments, or awards actually received related to the negligent acts of others which have resulted in the medical condition for which the patient has received hospital health care service. The pendency of such settlements, judgments, or awards must not stay hospital obligations to consider an eligible patient for charity care. [2024 c 121 s 28; 2022 c 197 s 1; 2018 c 263 s 1; 1995 c 269 s 2203; 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 502.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 70.41.020 was amended by 2025 c 182 s 4, changing subsection (8) to subsection (9).

(2) The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

Application—2022 c 197: "This act applies prospectively only to care provided on or after July 1, 2022. This act does not affect the ability of a patient who received care prior to July 1, 2022, to receive charity care under RCW 70.170.020 and 70.170.060 as the sections existed before that date." [2022 c 197 s 4.]

Effective date—2018 c 263: "This act takes effect October 1, 2018." [2018 c 263 s 3.]

Effective date—Part headings not law—Severability—1995 c 269: See notes following RCW 18.16.050.