§ 367. Authorization for hospital care. 1. Except as permitted by the regulations of the department, so far as practicable, no patient shall be admitted to a hospital as a public charge under this title or this chapter without the prior authorization of the social services official responsible for authorizing such care. If a patient is admitted without prior authorization of the appropriate social services official and the hospital has reason to believe that the patient will be unable to pay for his care, and is or may be eligible for care under this title or this chapter, it may send a notice containing a report of the facts of the case to such social services official who shall promptly advise the patient or his representative of his right to apply for medical assistance and, if eligible, to have the cost of his care paid for under this chapter. If the identity of the social services official responsible for authorizing such care is not known by the hospital, such notice shall be sent to the commissioner of the social services district in which the hospital is located who shall make an investigation to determine which social services district may be responsible for authorizing such care and appropriately notify such district, which shall advise such patient or his representative of his right to apply, and if eligible to have the cost of his care paid for under this chapter. The cost of care of an eligible patient shall be a charge against a social services district only when authorized by the commissioner of social services of such district, which authorization shall not be withheld from any patient eligible for such care pursuant to this title and the regulations of the department.

2. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of law, the social services official responsible for authorizing hospital or health related services shall withhold payment for such services upon the certification of the commissioner of health that payment for such care is unauthorized under the medical assistance program.