

## **Your Rights and Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills**

When you get emergency care or get treated by an out-of-network provider at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center, you are protected from surprise billing or balance billing.

### **What is “balance billing” (sometimes called “surprise billing”)?**

When you see a doctor or other health care provider, you may owe certain out-of-pocket costs, such as a copayment, coinsurance, and/or a deductible. You may have other costs or have to pay the entire bill if you see a provider or visit a health care facility that isn't in your health plan's network.

“Out-of-network” describes providers and facilities that haven't signed a contract with your health plan. Out-of-network providers may be permitted to bill you for the difference between what your plan agreed to pay and the full amount charged for a service. This is called **“balance billing.”** This amount is likely more than in-network costs for the same service and might not count toward your annual out-of-pocket limit.

“Surprise billing” is an unexpected balance bill. This can happen when you can't control who is involved in your care—like when you have an emergency or when you schedule a visit at an in-network facility but are unexpectedly treated by an out-of-network provider.

### **You are protected from balance billing for:**

#### **Emergency services**

If you have an emergency medical condition and get emergency services from an out-of-network provider or facility, the most the provider or facility may bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount (such as copayments and coinsurance). You **can't** be balance billed for these emergency services. This includes services you may get after you're in stable condition, unless you give written consent and give up your protections not to be balance billed for these post-stabilization services.

Ohio law protects patients covered by state-regulated insurance plans and insurance plans subject to the jurisdiction of the superintendent of insurance from balance-billing for covered emergency services provided by an out-of-network provider at an out-of-network emergency facility and at an in-network emergency facility. These protections require patients to pay only their in-network cost-sharing amounts. For more information, see Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3922.01, 3902.50, 3902.51.

#### **Certain services at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center**

When you get services from an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center, certain providers there may be out-of-network. In these cases, the most those providers

may bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount. This applies to emergency medicine, anesthesia, pathology, radiology, laboratory, neonatology, assistant surgeon, hospitalist, or intensivist services. These providers can't balance bill you and may not ask you to give up your protections not to be balance billed.

If you get other services at these in-network facilities, out-of-network providers can't balance bill you, unless you give written consent and give up your protections.

**You're never required to give up your protections from balance billing. You also aren't required to get care out-of-network. You can choose a provider or facility in your plan's network.**

Ohio law protects patients covered by state-regulated insurance plans and insurance plans subject to the jurisdiction of the superintendent of insurance from balance-billing for covered services provided by an out-of-network provider at an in-network facility if a patient did not have the ability to request an in-network provider. These protections require patients to pay only their in-network cost-sharing amounts. For all other medical services provided to a covered patient by an out-of-network provider at an in-network facility, a patient cannot be balance-billed unless the patient is informed, provided with a good faith estimate of the cost of the healthcare services, and consents. For more information, see Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3922.01, 3902.50, 3902.51.

**When balance billing isn't allowed, you also have the following protections:**

- You are only responsible for paying your share of the cost (like the copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles that you would pay if the provider or facility was in-network). Your health plan will pay out-of-network providers and facilities directly.
- Your health plan generally must:
  - Cover emergency services without requiring you to get approval for services in advance (prior authorization).
  - Cover emergency services by out-of-network providers.
  - Base what you owe the provider or facility (cost-sharing) on what it would pay an in-network provider or facility and show that amount in your explanation of benefits.
  - Count any amount you pay for emergency services or out-of-network services toward your deductible and out-of-pocket limit.

**If you believe you've been wrongly billed, you may contact:**

- The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) at **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) or visit <https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises> for more information about your rights under federal law.

- Your health plan to ask them why you got the bill and if it's correct. If it was an emergency, ask your health plan if they processed your claim as an emergency.
- The Ohio Department of Insurance at 1-800-686-1526.

## **Good Faith Estimate**

**You have the right to receive a “Good Faith Estimate” explaining how much your medical care will cost.**

Under the law, healthcare providers need to give **patients who don't have insurance or who are not using insurance** an estimate of the bill for medical items and services.

- You have the right to receive a Good Faith Estimate for the total expected cost of any non-emergency items or services. This includes related costs like medical tests, prescription drugs, equipment and hospital fees.
- Make sure your healthcare provider gives you a Good Faith Estimate in writing at least one business day before your medical service or item. You can also ask your healthcare provider, and any other provider you choose, for a Good Faith Estimate before you schedule an item or service.
- If you receive a bill that is at least \$400 more than your Good Faith Estimate, you can dispute the bill.
- Make sure to save a copy or picture of your Good Faith Estimate.

## **Get More Information**

For questions or more information about your right to a Good Faith Estimate, visit [cms.gov/nosurprises](https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises) or call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227).