



Your Rights and Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills

When you get emergency care or are treated by an out-of-network provider at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center, you are protected from balance billing. In these cases, you should not be charged more than your plan's copayments, coinsurance, and/or deductible.

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](#), like a [copayment](#), [coinsurance](#), or [deductible](#). You may have additional costs, have to pay the entire bill if you see a provider, or visit a health care facility that is not in your health plan's network.

“Out-of-network” means providers and facilities that have not signed a contract with your health plan to provide services. Out-of-network providers may be allowed to bill you for the difference between what your plan pays 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 plan's deductible or annual out-of-pocket limit.

“Surprise billing” is an unexpected balance bill. This can happen when you cannot 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. Surprise medical bills could cost thousands of dollars depending on the procedure or service.

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 they can bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount (such as copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles). You cannot be balance billed for these emergency services. This includes services you may get after you are in stable condition, unless you give written consent and give up your protections not to be balanced billed for these post-stabilization services.

If you get other types of services at these in-network facilities, out-of-network providers cannot balance bill you, unless you have given written consent and give up your protections.



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

WARNING, LIMITED BENEFITS WILL BE PAID WHEN NON-PARTICIPATING PROVIDERS ARE USED. You should be aware that when you elect to utilize the services of a non-participating provider for a covered service in non-emergency situations, benefit payments to such non-participating provider are not based upon the amount billed. The basis of your benefit payment will be determined according to your policy's fee schedule, usual and customary charge, or other method as defined by the policy. YOU CAN EXPECT TO PAY MORE THAN THE COINSURANCE AMOUNT DEFINED IN THE POLICY AFTER THE PLAN HAS PAID ITS REQUIRED PORTION. Non-participating providers may bill members for any amount up to the billed charge after the plan has paid its portion of the bill. Participating providers have agreed to accept discounted payments for services with no additional billing to the member other than co-insurance and deductible amounts. You may obtain further information about the participating status of professional providers and information on out-of-pocket expenses by calling the toll free telephone number on your identification card. (Source Illinois Public Act 096-1523).

When balance billing is not allowed, you also have these protections:

- You are only responsible for paying your share of the cost (like the copayments, coinsurance, and deductible that you would pay if the provider or facility were in-network). Your health plan will pay any additional costs to out-of-network providers and facilities directly.
- Generally, your health plan must:
 - Cover emergency services without requiring you to get approval for services in advance (also known as "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 in-network deductible and out-of-pocket limit.

If you think you have been wrongly billed, contact:

The Illinois Department of Insurance, 320 West Washington Street Springfield, IL 62767
Phone: 1-877-527-9431
Or visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises/consumers or call 1-800-985-3059.