

# 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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.

**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.**

## 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:**

### Fully Insured Plans:

Pennsylvania Insurance Department

877.881.6388

[www.insurance.pa.gov/coverage/health-insurance/no-surprises-act/](http://www.insurance.pa.gov/coverage/health-insurance/no-surprises-act/) website for more information about your rights under state law.

### Self-Funded, Admin Services Only, and Level-Funded Plans:

Federal No Surprises Help Desk Contact Information

1-800-985-3059

<http://www.cms.gov/nosurprises> website for more information about your rights under federal law.