

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 facility, 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.

Insurers are required to tell you which providers and facilities are in their networks. Providers and facilities must tell you with which provider networks they participate. This information is on the insurer's, provider's, or facility's website or on request.

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 deductibles, copayments and coinsurance). You **can't** be balance billed for these emergency services. This includes services at the same facility that 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 facility

When you get services from an in-network facility, 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, laboratory, surgeon and assistant surgeon services, and professional ancillary

services such as anesthesia, pathology, radiology, neonatology, hospitalist, or intensivist services. These providers **can't** balance bill you and **can't** ask you to give up your protections not to be balance billed.

If you receive 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.

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 an 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 in-network deductible and in-network out-of-pocket limit.

If you believe you have been wrongly billed, you may call the Dakota Family Services business office at: **701-857-4207**, the federal agencies responsible for enforcing the federal balance billing protection law at: **1-800-985-3059**, and/or file a complaint with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at: <https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises/consumers>

Visit [cms.gov/nosurprises](https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises) for more information about your rights under federal law.