

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.

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 [deductible](#). You may have additional costs, or you may 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 plan's deductible or 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. Surprise medical bills could cost thousands of dollars depending on the procedure or service.

You're protected from balance billing for:

Emergency services

If you have an emergency medical condition and receive 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.

Please note: Franciscan Children's does not offer Emergency Room services. If you feel you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest hospital's emergency department.

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 types of 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 out-of-network care. You can choose a provider or facility in your plan's network.

In addition, under Massachusetts law, you are entitled to certain notices and information regarding the network status of your provider, estimated cost of care and other matters. If your provider is out of network for your health plan, your provider cannot balance bill you for certain scheduled services -- beyond the amount you would owe if the provider were an in-network provider -- if these notices and information are not provided to you within certain timeframes, which vary, depending on when you schedule your appointment.

If you have questions about a bill you have received or have questions about your insurance, you may contact Patient Financial Services Customer Support at [617-779-1202](tel:617-779-1202).

When balance billing isn't 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 was 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've been wrongly billed, contact:

- The federal phone number for information and complaints is: [1-800-985-3059](tel:1-800-985-3059).
- Massachusetts Attorney General's office at [1-888-830-6277](tel:1-888-830-6277), or online at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-health-care-complaint>

Visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises/consumers for more information about your rights under federal law.