

NORTH ATLANTA ENDOCRINOLOGY AND DIABETES, P.C.

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Your Rights and Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills

These requirements don't apply to people with coverage through programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Indian Health Services, Veterans Affairs Health Care, or TRICARE. These programs have other protections against high medical bills.

When you get emergency care or are treated by an out-of-network provider at an in-network facility, including a hospital or ambulatory surgical center, you are protected from balance billing. In these cases, you shouldn't 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 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" means providers and facilities that haven't 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 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 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, including a hospital or ambulatory surgery center, the most they can bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount (such as copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles). 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 see below for information regarding Georgia law.

Certain services at an in-network facility including a hospital or ambulatory surgical center

When you get services from an in-network facility, including a hospital or ambulatory surgical center, certain providers there may be out-of-network. In these cases, the most those providers can 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. *Please see below for information regarding Georgia law.*

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.

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 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.

Georgia Law: Georgia law generally contains balance billing protections similar to those under the No Surprises Act (as described in this Notice), for individuals enrolled in fully funded commercial plans, such as preferred provider (“PPO”) plans, and health maintenance organization (“HMO”) plans. If you have one of these plans, Georgia also extends the balance billing protections to covered emergency and non-emergency medical services provided by nonparticipating providers in participating birthing centers, diagnostic and treatment centers, hospices, or similar institutions. If you are unsure whether you have one of these plans, please review your insurance card or call your insurance carrier.

If you think you have been wrongly billed, contact the HHS No Surprises Helpdesk at 1-800-985-3059, which is the entity responsible for enforcing the federal balance or surprise billing protection laws. The federal phone number for information and complaints is: 1-800-985-3059. Visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises/consumers for more information about your rights under federal law.

If you have a Georgia PPO or HMO plan and think you have been wrongly billed by your health care provider, you may file a complaint with the Georgia Consumer Protection Division by calling (404) 651-8600 or visiting <https://consumer.georgia.gov/resolve-your-dispute/how-do-i-file-complaint/consumer-complaint-form#noback>. If you believe you have received an improper bill from your health plan, you may file a complaint with the Office of Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire by emailing consumercomplaints@oci.ga.gov or visiting <https://oci.georgia.gov/insurance-resources/complaints-fraud>.