

Ambulance Billing

As a result of budget hearings last fall, City Council approved a recommendation from City staff to initiate an EMS User fee, sometimes commonly referred to as ambulance billing. Effective July 1, 2003, patients transported to the hospital by the Department of Fire & Emergency Services will have their insurance company billed for the transportation service. City Council has adopted a “soft billing” policy and no resident will be billed for EMS services. The City will be employing the services of a third-party billing service to administer the billing program. The following questions and answers have been prepared to further explain how the EMS ambulance billing fee process will work:

What is an EMS User fee?

A fee is charged for patients transported to a hospital facility by the fire department emergency medical service.

How is the fee billed?

The patient’s insurance company or Medicare (if applicable) will be direct billed electronically by the City’s billing company. No resident will receive a bill.

Will I receive a bill?

No. The insurance company or Medicare are direct billed.

Will I receive a bill for my insurance co-pay?

No. The Office of Inspector General has determined that local taxes paid to the City are acceptable as co-pay amounts. It is the City’s policy that no resident be billed for EMS Services.

Will I receive a bill if I don’t have insurance?

No. The Inspector General’s Opinion has determined that local taxes paid to the City are accepted as payment made in full. It is the City’s policy that no resident be billed for EMS Services.

Will this fee raise the cost of my insurance?

No. The Ohio Revised Code requires insurance companies to have provisions in their policy coverage for ambulance transports. Medicare and Medicaid also have required provisions for ambulance transportation fees. Thus, residents have been paying for ambulance transportation services in their insurance premiums even if the fee was not previously collected.

If I do not have insurance, will my level of care be affected?

No. Implementation of the ambulance billing fee will not affect the level of care or priority of treatment in any way. You will be treated and transported regardless of whether or not you have insurance.

What is the fee rate?

For a basic life support (BLS) transport, the current fee is \$307 plus \$2.39 per loaded mile. Advanced life support (ALS) is \$667 plus \$6.96 per loaded mile. These are the rates charged to the insurance company or Medicare. You as a resident will not be responsible for these fees.

How is the fee established?

The City is following the usual and customary rates established by Medicare for our area.

Fire Chief Stan Crosley stated it is important for residents to understand that ambulance response or level of care will not be affected by the ambulance billing policy. When you call 9-1-1, a medic crew will respond as quickly as possible, render the appropriate care, and transport you to the hospital. Only then will the patient be asked if they have insurance.

If residents have any questions concerning the ambulance billing policy, they are encouraged to contact the Department of Fire & Emergency Services at 498-2346.