

Texas Patients Shouldn't Face Surprise Bills for Critical & Lifesaving Ground Ambulance Services

SUPPORT SB 916 (Sen. Zaffirini & Rep. Spiller)

Last session, the Texas Legislature adopted temporary safeguards to protect patients from surprise ambulance bills. SB 916 extends these critical protections so Texans won't be burdened by unexpected costs during emergencies. Patients should never be caught in the middle of billing disputes.

Background: What's a surprise bill?

- Patients often cannot choose their provider in an emergency.
- When a provider is out of network, there is no agreed-to rate for services.
- Without an agreed-to rate, patients may face unexpected "surprise bills."

Texas has led in protections from surprise bills:

- Texas lawmakers have worked for over two decades to address surprise billing, ensuring patients aren't stuck in the middle of payment disputes between healthcare providers and health plans.
- The 2019 landmark law (SB 1264) banned most surprise bills but excluded ground ambulance services.
- In the 88th session, health plans, EMS providers, patient groups, and business leaders supported SB 2476, establishing new protections for critical ambulance services—again positioning Texas as a leader in patient protection.

Why do we need SB 916?

- Federal lawmakers have been working towards a national solution for patient surprise billing protections. While we wait, Texas implemented our own temporary protections.
- SB 916 extends the protections created by SB 2476 for two more years, giving Congress additional time to craft a solution that covers all Texans.

Broad Support: Texas EMS agencies, health insurers, consumer advocates, and the business community all support extending these protections, ensuring patients aren't caught in the middle of billing disputes.

