

CHARLES COUNTY EMS TRANSPORT FEE FOR SERVICE POLICY

SUBJECT: CHARLES COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (CCEMS)
TRANSPORT FEE FOR SERVICE POLICY

PURPOSE: To provide a policy covering the EMS Transport Fee for Service billing procedures followed by Charles County Emergency Medical Services (CCEMS). This policy explains what actions occur when a patient receives pre-hospital emergency medical services and transportation, from the County's EMS providers.

POLICY: It is part of Charles County's mission to provide premium quality pre-hospital emergency medical services to individuals, regardless of ability to pay for such services. At no time will CCEMS providers engage in collections for services at the scene, en route, or upon delivery of the patient to a health care facility. A patient's, or financially responsible party's, ability to pay for services will never reflect in the type or quality of services provided. It is important to note that patient care will never be compromised in any way by this program and patients should never be afraid to call 9-1-1 for help when needed.

The costs of providing pre-hospital emergency medical services are expensive by nature and continue to rise, presenting the ongoing challenge of assuring adequate funding.

Effective July 1, 2009, the Charles County Commissioners will implement an EMS Transport Fee for Service Program to recover some of the costs associated with providing EMS services. EMS billing is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and commercial insurance policies.

All patients or financially responsible parties, regardless of race, creed, sex, age, national origin or financial status will be billed for EMS services provided if they are transported to any hospital's emergency department and/or labor and delivery unit. A patient or financially responsible party may also be billed in the event of routine, non-emergency type transports if accompanied by an CCEMS provider.

On May 20, 2009, the Charles County Commissioners approved and adopted the following fee categories and rates:

ALS I - \$401.00
ALS II - \$580.00
BLS - \$337.84
Mileage - \$6.87/mile

ALS I (Advanced Life Support I) is defined as transportation by a ground ambulance vehicle, medically necessary supplies and services and either an ALS assessment by ALS personnel or the provision of at least one ALS intervention.

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ALS II (Advanced Life Support II) is defined as either ground transportation by ground ambulance vehicle, medically necessary supplies and services, and the administration of at least three medications by intravenous push/bolus or continuous infusion excluding crystalloid, hypotonic, isotonic, and hypertonic solutions (Dextrose, Normal Saline, Ringer's Lactate); or ground transportation by ground ambulance vehicle, medically necessary supplies and the provision of at least one of the following ALS procedures:

- (1) Manual defibrillation/cardioversion.
- (2) Endotracheal intubation.
- (3) Central venous line.
- (4) Cardiac pacing.
- (5) Chest decompression.
- (6) Surgical airway.
- (7) Intraosseous line.

BLS (Basic Life Support) is defined as transportation by a ground ambulance vehicle, medically necessary supplies and services and either a BLS assessment by ALS or BLS personnel or the provision of at least one BLS intervention not requiring ALS intervention or transport.

I. SCOPE:

- A. The Charles County "EMS Transport Fee for Service" Policy applies to charges for pre-hospital EMS services that are rendered by Emergency Medical Services personnel from Charles County.
- B. A patient or financially responsible party will not be billed in the following circumstances:
 1. There will be no charge for services when a patient is not transported.
 2. Persons affected by natural or man-made calamity or disaster (including tornados, floods and hurricanes).
 3. Persons affected as a result of a Charles County declared State of Emergency, a Maryland State of Emergency (must include Charles County) as declared by the Governor, or a National State of Emergency as declared by the President of the United States of America.
 4. The County will not bill itself.
- C. If the patient or financially responsible party does not have health insurance or cannot afford to make payments, they can request information that includes a request for Financial Assistance for EMS

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Patients. All forms must be accurately completed with all necessary documentation, before the County will consider a fee waiver or financial assistance. A payment plan can also be arranged requiring moderate payments with no interest or penalties.

Charles County will address all cases of financial hardship based on the established financial hardship assistance policy. Any patient or financially responsible party requesting eligibility under the County's Financial Assistance for EMS Patients Policy must contact Meridian Financial Management (Meridian) at 1-888-429-5380 and work with them directly, diligently and cooperatively, to assure all necessary documentation is properly completed.

D. How the program is designed:

1. EMS responses have been predetermined by the County's EMS Officials, including the County's Medical Director. After the 9-1-1 Emergency Medical Dispatcher interrogates the caller, appropriate EMS units are sent to provide care to the patient. If transport to a health care facility results and an EMS provider accompanies the patient, the patient or a financially responsible party will be charged for those services.
2. If transport takes place and the patient's condition permits, the EMS provider will give the patient, or financially responsible party if available, a Notice of Privacy Practices containing information about disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI) per the federal HIPPA Privacy Rule. If a patient's condition does not permit such notice, it will be mailed to the patient's mailing address.
3. If circumstances allow, certain patient information can be gathered and placed on the patient care report, including, but not limited to: the patient's name, parent or guardian's name, the financially responsible party's name, mailing address, phone number, date of birth, social security number and pertinent medical information.
4. The EMS crew completes the patient care report upon turning the patient over to the receiving facility and submits a copy of the report to the County's EMS Division
5. Two photocopies of the report are made, one remains in a secured file with the County's EMS Division and is used for quality control and improvement, the second copy is sent to Meridian Financial Management, in Laurel, Maryland, for

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processing. Meridian is a medical billing company contracted by the Charles County Commissioners to administer the program.

6. Charles County / Meridian will make every effort to bill and collect payments from the patient's or the financially responsible party's insurance company directly.
7. Meridian will code the patient care report with the appropriate EMS category (as defined above.) Once coded, the patient, or financially responsible party, will be issued a "statement of charges" (not necessarily a bill), which includes a Lifetime Signature Authorization Form, a request for insurance information, and a Notice of Privacy Practices statement. If the patient has been transported before, they or the financially responsible party may only receive a statement of charges and a request for insurance information.
8. Any questions concerning the statement will be handled by Meridian. If Meridian is unable to satisfy the inquiry, it will be turned over to the Charles County Government's Department of Emergency Services for further action.
9. If there has been no response to the statement within 30 days, the patient or financially responsible party will receive a second statement directing them to remit payment by check, Visa/MasterCard/Discover Card and/or to contact Meridian's office, to set up a payment plan
10. If there has been no response to the second statement or within 60 days of the first billing, the patient or financially responsible party will receive a third statement requesting payment and the account will be turned over to Meridian's Customer Service/Accounts Receivable department for action or resolution.
11. If there has been no response or payment within 90 days from the first statement, Meridian will forward the delinquent account information to the Charles County Government's Department of Emergency Services for immediate action.
12. Some insurance companies may submit payment to the patient or financially responsible party directly, when it should be sent to Charles County. If this occurs and the patient or financially responsible party has not forwarded

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the check to Charles County, he or she will receive a statement and telephone call from Meridian requesting reimbursement.

13. Any changes to this policy must be authorized by the Charles County Commissioners.