



+ NEWS BRIEF

TRUMP ANNOUNCES PLAN TO COMBAT SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLING

On May 9, 2019, President Donald Trump delivered a speech criticizing the practice of surprise medical billing. He announced a general plan of attack and hinted at a few specifics for curbing the trend.

The president's speech aligned with this administration's American Patients First initiative—a blueprint for lowering consumer health costs. Here are the four main regulatory aspects called out by the president, suggesting that they might be tackled first:

- + In emergency situations, patients shouldn't have to "bear the burden" of out-of-network costs.
- + Balanced billing should be prohibited for emergency care.
- + For scheduled nonemergency care, patients should receive an "honest" bill up front—including an itemized list of out-of-pocket expenses the patient must cover.
- + Patients should not receive a surprise bill from out-of-network providers they did not choose themselves.

President Trump went on to state that any legislation would cover all health insurance, regardless of how it was acquired. This means individual and group coverage would still be afforded these protections.

In summary, this announcement keeps with this administration's commitment to lowering consumer health care costs through greater transparency.

The president ended the speech saying that the administration will be going even further to help curb "out-of-control" drug costs. He even hinted at future legislation that would be announced as soon as two weeks, touting it as "one of the strongest things we've done as an administration."

This means employers should stay tuned for more developments as further price-lowering initiatives are unveiled and plan specifics are laid out.

