



## Frequently Asked Questions Revenue Recovery Program

**1) Q. When did Louisa County implement EMS billing?**

A. Program implementation began October 1, 2008.

**2) Q. What is Revenue Recovery?**

A. Revenue Recovery is a program that allows counties to bill insurance companies and individuals for the cost of emergency medical transport services. When a patient is treated and transported, the insurance companies are billed for the services performed by the agency providers. Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance policies allow for reimbursement for this service.

**3) Q. Why do we need Revenue Recovery?**

A. It costs more each year to meet the needs of residents for quality EMS services. This is due to growth in population as well as continuous improvements in EMS technology, requiring upgrades or replacement of expensive equipment. Most insurance companies (including Medicaid and Medicare) will pay for emergency medical transports.

**4) Q. How is charging for emergency medical transport service allowed?**

A. The State authorizes counties to make reasonable charges for the use of emergency medical service vehicles.

**5) Q. How does Revenue Recovery work?**

A. The patient's insurance (Medicare, Medicaid or otherwise) is billed first for the full service fee based on the level of care provided. There are three basic care levels: ALS Transport Level 1, ALS Transport Level 2, and BLS Transport. Charges will also be generated for "Loaded" Mileage, which is calculated from the scene to the hospital facility.

**6) Q. What are ALS Transport Level 1, ALS Transport Level 2, and BLS Transports?**

A. The different transport types are based on the level of care a patient receives during an emergency transport. ALS 1 and ALS 2 are the two levels of Advanced Life Support and are given to the patient by a provider with a certification beyond EMT-Basic, such as a Paramedic. BLS transports are transports in which Basic Life Support treatment is given by an EMT-Basic or a provider with higher certification. The following fee schedule represents the fees that are charged for Louisa County Emergency Medical Transports:

Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport	\$575.00
Advanced Life Support (ALS) Transport Level 1	\$700.00
Advanced Life Support (ALS) Transport Level 2	\$875.00
Ground Transport Mileage	\$13.00 per mile

**7) Q. Will I have to pay for services if the ambulance does not transport me?**

A. If you are not transported, there will be no bill. Revenue recovery is based on what is termed "loaded service", whereby someone is actually transported.

**8) Q. Will I be denied EMS services if I can't prove I have insurance or money to pay the bill?**

A. No one should ever be afraid to dial 911 for help. No person will ever be denied emergency medical service because of the inability to pay a fee.

**9) Q. What if I can't afford to pay the bill?**

A. If any person is dealing with a financial hardship it is important to contact the County to discuss payment options. Through "compassionate billing," the County has the capacity to waive or reduce fees when it is determined the patient has a reduced ability to pay. Those who can not afford to pay may simply contact the County for other arrangements.

**10) Q. What is the County's Compassionate Billing Policy?**

A. Compassionate billing is intended to eliminate or minimize out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance services for those that do not have the means to pay. Any person dealing with a financial hardship should contact the County to discuss payment options.

**11) Q. What is the Resident Program?**

A. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) approved municipalities' insurance-only billing structures for EMS and ambulance services provided to residents and taxpayers by issuing a number of opinions, all of which allow local governments to accept the local taxes paid to count as the deductibles and co-pays for County residents. This eliminates any out-of-pocket cost for County residents. After transport, the County will bill the patient's insurance company, if applicable, for the services provided. Once insurance pays, the accounts are placed on a schedule to be written off so that the resident does not receive a bill for any remaining balance. Non-residents will receive bills for the remaining balances of their accounts after all applicable insurance providers have been billed.

**13) Q. Does Revenue Recovery cause health insurance premiums to escalate?**

A. The fact is that in most cases, health insurance premiums will continue to rise regardless of whether or not a community decides to bill for EMS transports. However, ambulance costs

are less than one percent of health care expenditures. Billing at the allowable costs will have minimal impact on insurance premiums. With less than one penny of every insurance dollar spent on EMS transports, such programs have virtually no effect on health insurance costs.

**14) Q. How does the billing process work?**

A. The County contracted this service out to a private company to handle the process. The process is similar to that of which happens when a person receives services from a doctor or other healthcare provider. First, the patient receives the service – emergency ambulance transportation to a hospital. Insurance information will be obtained routinely, often at the hospital. Once the patient has been treated, a claim is sent to the patient's insurance provider.

**15) Q. What if I am unable to sign a HIPAA form during the transport?**

A. A signed HIPAA form is required before any of your information can be released from the hospital. The billing company will mail you a form requesting your insurance information in order for your insurance company to be billed for the transport.

**16) Q. How is my insurance information collected?**

A. The billing company and/or the Revenue Recovery Administrator will contact the hospital for your information. All information that is received is kept confidential.

**17) Q. How is my privacy protected?**

A. All providers have been trained on patient privacy through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and will strictly adhere to those standards.

**18) Q. Who do I call if I have a billing or insurance problem?**

A. The billing company has customer service representatives to address billing and insurance questions. If you are not satisfied, you may contact the Revenue Recovery Administrator at (540) 967-3404 or (866) 330-8272.

**19) Q. How much money can counties realistically expect to collect through the Revenue Recovery Program?**

A. This varies from agency to agency, region to region and is difficult to compare because of the number of factors that are involved, including, but not limited to, demographics, location, percentage of insured patients, number of calls per day/month/year, type of billing level, individual-agency set fees for services, etc.

**20) Q. Does billing impact the donations and fund drives for volunteer EMS agencies?**

A. It is commonly heard that an agency that begins billing for services will see a significant decrease in the amount of funds collected from annual fund drives and donations to the

agency. Most agencies and billing companies alike who have researched the statement have not found evidence to back up the claim. It has been found that billing for services has a minimal impact on annual fund drive and donation collections. The cost of providing EMS services continues to rise and volunteer EMS agencies still need your help.

**21) Q. Does Revenue Recovery provide all the support needed to fund EMS?**

A. No. Money collected through Revenue Recovery will help pay for additional operational and capital expenses that are needed in the next several years. However, EMS also has very significant expenses that will not be completely funded by Revenue Recovery.

**22) Q. How does this program benefit the taxpayer?**

A. Insurance (including Medicaid and Medicare) will pay for emergency medical transports. It makes sense to generate revenue from the services provided. The other option would be to raise taxes. The majority of counties in Virginia are now successfully conducting revenue recovery programs in support of their EMS programs.

**For more information, questions, or to schedule a community presentation, please call Kim Smith at (540) 967-3404 or (866) 330-8272 or email [revrecovery@louisia.org](mailto:revrecovery@louisia.org).**