

RESOLUTION R-04-125

**RESOLUTION APPROVING USER FEES
FOR MANATEE COUNTY AMBULANCE
SERVICES; ADOPTING BILLING AND
COLLECTION PROCEDURES; AND
PROVIDING FOR ADJUSTMENTS,
PAYMENT PLANS AND FEE WAIVERS.**

WHEREAS, Manatee County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides ambulance services to the residents and visitors of Manatee County; and

WHEREAS, the Manatee County EMS operating budget is funded exclusively through ad valorem taxes, general revenues and user fees; and

WHEREAS, increasing costs for staffing and medical supplies have increased the cost of EMS services; and

WHEREAS, fees, billing and collection procedures, and provisions for adjustments and waivers were established by the Board of County Commissioners in Resolution R-04-74; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary, expedient, and in the best interest of the citizens to adjust user fees to properly assess a portion of the cost to the users of these services, and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to maintain procedures for billing and collection of EMS fees, for providing adjustments and waivers, and for approving hardship cases and payment plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida that:

SECTION ONE: EMS USER FEES

The schedule of rates attached hereto as Schedule A are adopted as the fees for emergency medical services and ambulance transportation furnished to emergency patients by the Manatee County EMS.

SECTION TWO: BILLING AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The following shall be guidelines for billing and collection procedures for emergency medical service fees and charges:

- A. Initial fees and charges for ambulance services shall be assessed either prior to or following the service provision, as service dynamics reasonably permit. Unpaid fees and charges, subsequent to time of service, shall be reflected in an accounts receivable subsidiary ledger system to be maintained by the Financial Management Department, EMS Billing Section, as approved by and coordinated with the County Finance Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

- B. An initial bill for ambulance services shall be processed in the following manner after service is provided.
 - 1. The County will send an initial bill to the service recipient or responsible party and/or to the service recipient's or responsible party's insurance carrier provided that appropriate insurance information and permissions are made available to the EMS Billing Section. Third party billing assignment of payments will be accepted with the unpaid difference, if any, remaining the responsibility of the service recipient or responsible party. Credit card payments will be accepted in accordance with procedures established by the Clerk of the Circuit Court, County Finance Division.

 - 2. The EMS Billing Section will accept Medicare assignment, as a participating provider, and will wait no less than forty-five (45) days for payment if Medicare or other insurance carriers are billed. Upon payment by Medicare, billing for the service recipient's co-pay will be forwarded to the service recipient or responsible party or to secondary or other insurance, provided appropriate information has been received by the EMS Billing Section. If the claim is denied by Medicare, a bill will be sent to the service recipient or responsible party.

 - 3. If information is provided to the EMS Billing Section indicating that Medicaid is the appropriate payment source, then county will send a claim to Medicaid and accept assignment. The EMS Billing Section will wait no less than sixty (60) days for payment if Medicaid is billed. If the claim is denied because of no coverage at the time of service, a bill will be sent to the recipient or responsible party. If Medicaid denies the claim because they have deemed the service as not medically

necessary, then the account will be adjusted per the rules and regulations of Medicaid.

4. In the event the service recipient or responsible party does not have or does not provide proof of insurance coverage, the bill for ambulance services shall be sent directly to the service recipient or responsible party for payment. The EMS Billing Section will wait no less than thirty (30) days for payment.
 5. If payment or additional billing information is not received within time frames established by the Financial Management Department Director, past due notices and collection efforts will be conducted in accordance with procedures coordinated with the Clerk of the Circuit Court and/or a contracted collection agency. At any time during the billing process accounts may be referred to collections staff at the Clerk of the Circuit Court for assistance in locating patients or billing information so that the billing process may continue.
- C. A reasonable and customary payment plan will be made available for service recipients and responsible parties in accordance with procedures established by the Financial Management Department Director. Should the service recipient or responsible party fail to meet the terms and conditions of the payment plan, the unpaid balance shall become due and payable, and subject to established collection procedures.
- D. When ambulance service bill(s), at any stage in this billing and collection process, are returned because the Postal Service cannot effectuate delivery, the EMS Billing Section shall make a reasonable effort to ascertain the correct mailing address. If such efforts fail, the account(s) may be considered for other collection alternatives.
- E. Nothing contained in this section shall preclude reasonable telephone or other appropriate contact for billing and collection purposes, as allowed by applicable laws.

SECTION THREE: ADJUSTMENT OF EMS USER FEES

The following shall be minimum guidelines for adjustments to ambulance service fees and accounts:

1. Medicare and Medicaid Adjustments – contractual adjustments under Medicare and/or Medicaid assignment will be made upon notification by

receipt of the Explanation of Medicare/Medicaid Benefits (EOMB) in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

2. Victim's Compensation Contractual Adjustment – Contractual adjustments will be made in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
3. Worker's Compensation Contractual Adjustment – Contractual adjustments will be made in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
4. Champus/Tricare/Veterans' Administration Adjustments - Contractual adjustments will be made in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
5. Railroad Retirement Adjustments - Contractual adjustments will be made in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
6. HMO Adjustments – Contractual adjustments under Medicare assignment and other Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) will be made upon notification by receipt of the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
7. Court Actions – Upon receipt of court documents, including, but not limited to bankruptcy and probate proceedings, accounts shall be adjusted as specified in the court document.
8. INS Detainees – Medical expenses for detainees of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) are paid by the Federal Government. In accordance with agreements between INS and Manatee County, amounts not paid by INS will not be billed to the patient, but will be adjusted to zero.
9. Adjustment of Accounts Receivable – Annually the EMS Billing Section shall report to the Board past due accounts that are believed to be uncollectible, along with accounts with small balances. After approval by the Board, these accounts shall be removed from the active accounts receivable in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
10. Other Adjustments – Adjustments (other than correction of inadvertent errors) will be reflected on a patient's account, when based on extenuating circumstances, it is in the best interest of Manatee County to make such adjustments. All adjustments not specified in the resolution must be approved by the Public Safety or Financial Management Director or their

respective designees. Adjustments made in this manner will be ratified by the Board annually.

SECTION FOUR: WAIVER OF EMS USER FEES

Fee waivers and other adjustments are authorized as follows:

- A. User fees for EMS ambulance stand-by services for the following community special events shall be waived as the Board finds that a valid public purpose is hereby established in recognition of their contributions to the community: (1) Manatee County Fair; (2) Manatee County Public High School varsity and junior varsity football games; (3) Heritage Festival events; and (4) Southeastern Guide Dog events. Fees for other community special events may be waived in accordance with procedures approved by the County Administrator
- B. It is recognized that certain service recipients or responsible parties may need to be identified and processed and financial hardship cases. Hardship cases would be determined by the Community Services Department using criteria established for the Individual Fee Assistance Program in accordance with established policies or as determined eligible in accordance with the Indigent Care Agreement with Manatee Memorial Hospital. If determined eligible, the patient will be exempt from all or part of the charges for ambulance services. Account balances for these accounts will be adjusted as specified for patients declared eligible by the Community Services Department Director or designee.
- C. Payments will be pursued from inmates and other payers that may be responsible for their medical care in accordance with FS 901.35 and/or 951.032. Compliance with FS 901.35(2)(a) will be accomplished by adjusting accounts which have no source for payment to zero without further billing to other County funding sources.
- D. It is recognized that it is not cost effective to process billings and/or pursue collection of accounts with small balances of \$25 or less, or to issue checks for refunds of \$10 or less. Once an account balance falls below \$25, collection efforts beyond mailing an invoice will be discontinued. Refund checks will be issued for accounts that have credit balances greater than \$10. Refund checks of \$10 or less will be issued when requested within one year of the payment date that created the refundable amount by the payer that is owed the refund.
- E. Because ambulance fees charged for treatment and transportation of public safety workers would be covered by worker's compensation insurance, fees for emergency medical services for firemen, police and EMS personnel, whether

responding to an emergency on-duty or off-duty will not be waived. Should insurance not be available, fees will be waived so that no public safety employee is adversely affected for being injured while fulfilling their responsibilities to the public.

SECTION FIVE: EFFECTIVE DATE

This Resolution rescinds and replaces R-03-74, and shall become effective for ambulance services performed on or after June 1, 2004.

ADOPTED in open session with a quorum present and voting on this 18th day of May, 2004.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA



BY: [Signature]

ATTEST: R.B. Shore
Clerk of the Circuit Court

BY: [Signature]
pc

SCHEDULE A
AMBULANCE FEES

<u>SERVICE DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>CHARGE</u>
TRANSPORT SERVICES	
Basic Life Support Non-Emergency Transport (scheduled trip)	\$ 230.00
Basic Life Support Emergency Transport	\$ 368.00
Advanced Life Support Non-Emergency Transport (scheduled trip)	\$ 276.00
Advanced Life Support Emergency Transport, Level 1	\$ 437.00
Advanced Life Support Emergency Transport, Level 2	\$ 633.00
Patient Deceased - treated but not transported (If transported, level of transport service rendered is charged)	\$ 368.00
MILEAGE RATES	
Mileage, charge per loaded mile	\$ 7.35
SERVICES WITHOUT TRANSPORT	
Advanced Life Support Level 1 services rendered without transport are billed at the Advanced Life Support non-emergency rate	\$ 276.00
Advanced Life Support Level 2 services rendered without transport are billed at the Advanced Life Support Level 1 rate	\$ 437.00
Emergency Helicopter Response Preparation in addition to Advanced Life Support services	\$ 230.00
MULTIPLE TRANSPORTS	
For two patients transported simultaneously, the charge will be equal to 75 percent of the charge for the level of care given, plus the applicable mileage divided by 2.	
For three or more patients transported simultaneously, the charge will be equal to 60 percent of the charge for the level of care given, plus the applicable mileage divided by the number of patients transported.	
SPECIAL EVENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS RATES	
Stand-by time for ambulance and crew, per 1/4 hour	\$ 25.00
Stand-by time for staff without ambulance, per person, per 1/4 hour	\$ 15.00
Minimum charge will be for one hour and charges will be rounded up to the next 1/4 hour.	