



*For Immediate release*

## **Surprise Medical Bills Cause Confusion and Stress For Patients and Providers Alike**

***Superintendent of Insurance wants to hear from New Mexico***

*Santa Fe, NM – March 1, 2016* – Surprise medical bills, sometimes for exorbitant amounts, are blindsiding many consumers across the country. In one frequent scenario, patients are treated without their knowledge or consent by providers who do not participate in their health plan, even though patients have sought care at an emergency room or hospital that is in their insurance plan’s network. When a patient is sick or injured, the last thing that should have to be on their mind is an unexpected medical bill from a doctor or other healthcare provider. New Mexico’s Office of Superintendent of Insurance (OSI) hopes to gain better insight into surprise and balance billing practices through public forums during the month of March. Through these forums, OSI seeks feedback on creating better consumer protections and a fair-minded medical billing system.

“Our office continues to be contacted by New Mexicans needing help to understand why they are being billed hundreds or thousands of dollars, even when they have a comprehensive health insurance plan,” remarked New Mexico Superintendent of Insurance, John Franchini. “Recently, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) released a Model Network Adequacy Law which addresses balance billing on a high level. We think we need to take it a step further to address the issue and find a solution to better assist the consumers, providers, and health insurance carriers of New Mexico.”

The public forums will also help consumers connect to OSI’s free resources for addressing private health insurance questions, concerns, complaints, appeals, or grievances. New Mexico’s Office of Superintendent of Insurance regulates individual, small group, and some large group private health insurance plans. As space is limited for each location, reservation requests can be sent to [OSI.RSVP@state.nm.us](mailto:OSI.RSVP@state.nm.us) or via phone at 505-322-2186; dates for the upcoming forums are provided below.

“If you have received a surprise medical bill from your private health insurance and need help, please attend one of the public forums, webinars, or contact our Managed Health Care Bureau online at [www.osi.state.nm.us](http://www.osi.state.nm.us) or via phone at 1-855-4-ASK-OSI. We are here to help guide you,” stated Superintendent Franchini.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Location</b>
Mon, 3/14	10-11:30am	Insurance Carriers and Providers	Abq Hispano Chamber of Commerce
Wed, 3/16	6-7:30pm	Public	Albuquerque: UNM School of Law
Thurs, 3/17	12-2pm	Public	Webinar
Wed, 3/23	6-7:30pm	Public	Las Cruces: Dona Ana Community College
Tues, 3/29	6-8pm	Public	Webinar

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*The **Office of Superintendent of Insurance** was created through New Mexico legislative action in 2012. Article XI, Section 20, of the New Mexico Constitution separated the Insurance Division from the Public Regulation Commission, with the Superintendent of Insurance being appointed by an insurance nominating committee, made of members chosen by the Legislature, governor, and by committee members. [www.osi.state.nm.us](http://www.osi.state.nm.us)*

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