

## **Rushed Surprise Billing Legislation Could Threaten Access to Care, Devastate Providers**

- 1. COVID-19 patients are protected from surprise medical bills during the pandemic because providers agreed to not balance bill as a condition of accepting CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payments.**
  - Hospitals agree that surprise billing must end. Protecting patients is our top priority.
  - We urge Congress not to adopt legislation that undermines patient access to providers, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 2. If advanced too hastily, any surprise medical billing legislation included in a year-end legislative package could harm health care providers' ability to fully respond to the COVID-19 resurgence that is devastating California right now.**
  - According to the Congressional Budget Office, all of the surprise billing legislation before Congress would result in a 15-20% payment reduction for in-network and out-of-network providers.
  - California hospitals collectively report \$14 billion in losses so far from the pandemic — in addition to increased costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), staffing, and public health protections.
  - California physicians continue to experience 40% revenue losses, in addition to 15% increased costs for PPE, staffing, and public health protections. Physicians are extremely concerned about their long-term financial viability and ability to keep their doors open to patients.
  - Legislation that forces additional cuts during the public health emergency could jeopardize patient access to care.
- 3. A rushed surprise billing bill would be devastating and demoralizing for providers fighting to protect Californians during the height of the pandemic.**
  - These proposals reward an insurance industry that is enjoying record profits and has not shown any willingness to help providers during this public health emergency.
  - As COVID-19 surges to levels far beyond any seen so far in California, hospitals, physicians, and health care workers are overwhelmed, burned-out, and face serious financial struggles.
  - In California, ICU bed availability is below 15% in the Bay Area and Southern California and 8% in the Central Valley.
  - More than 10,000 COVID-19 patients are now hospitalized — a 72% increase from two weeks ago, and the number of patients in intensive care has risen by 69%.