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# neurosurgery

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**Contact:**

Katie Orrico

(202) 446-2024

[korrico@neurosurgery.org](mailto:korrico@neurosurgery.org)

## **Neurosurgeons Applaud Lawmakers on their Efforts to Address Unanticipated Medical Bills**

*Encouraged that legislation will protect patients from so-called “surprise medical bills.”*

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) enthusiastically voiced support for the efforts of Reps. **Raul Ruiz**, MD, (D-Calif.), **Phil Roe**, MD, (R-Tenn.) and others to develop legislation to protect patients from unanticipated medical bills for out-of-network care that result from health plans with narrow and insufficient networks.

“Based on our review of a [summary of the legislation](#), the Ruiz-Roe proposal reflects neurosurgery’s [principles](#) on out-of-network care and is modeled after proven state approaches,” said **Ann R. Stroink**, MD, FAANS, a practicing neurosurgeon from Bloomington, Illinois, and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee.

Under the *Protecting People From Surprise Medical Bills Act*:

- Patients are held harmless and are only responsible for in-network cost-sharing rates.
- Any payment disputes will not involve the patient, but rather will be worked out between the health plan and providers.
- Transparency standards will be established, so patients are fully informed about providers’ network status and health plans will be required to keep provider directories up-to-date.
- Health plans will be required to pay the provider a commercially reasonable rate within 30 days. If either party is dissatisfied with that amount, they can privately settle on a payment amount or resolve the dispute using a baseball-style arbitration process that bases payment on the usual and customary cost of the service referenced from an independent medical claims database.

“The nation’s neurosurgeons are very concerned when patients receive unanticipated medical bills, particularly as Americans continue to struggle with rising health care costs. With their legislation, Reps. Ruiz and Roe strike the right balance to protect patients from unanticipated medical bills for out-of-network care, while at the same time facilitating a process to quickly, efficiently and fairly resolve physician and health plan billing disputes,” Dr. Stroink added.

She concluded, “The AANS and the CNS look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to advance bipartisan legislation that will protect patients, diminish the market dominance of health plans and help ensure that patients have timely access to the physician of their choice.”

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*The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit [www.aans.org](http://www.aans.org) or [www.cns.org](http://www.cns.org), read our blog [www.neurosurgeryblog.org](http://www.neurosurgeryblog.org), follow us on [Twitter](#) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).*