

**THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT IS OVER 100 PAGES.**  
**A COPY OF THE DETAIL LISTING OF UNCOLLECTIBLE**  
**ACCOUNTS HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO MINUTES.**

Agenda Item #: **3S2**

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

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Meeting Date:	September 14, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular
		<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing

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Department: Fire-Rescue

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**I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

**Motion and Title:** **Staff recommends motion to approve:** the write-off of uncollectible emergency transport patient accounts to remove these amounts from the County's general ledger for the following period:

October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 (FY 2017)                      \$13,656,723.07

**Summary:** In December 1994, the Board authorized Fire Rescue to transport critically ill/injured patients and bill for those services. The County contracts with a private company for these billings and collections services. The County receives payment from a number of sources, including commercial insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and private individuals. During the period October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, Fire Rescue generated \$53,301,117.26 in gross transport billings and collected (to-date) \$25,270,279.38. After adjustments of \$14,374,114.81, required under the guidelines of the Medicare/Medicaid programs, the balance of \$13,656,723.07 is currently deemed to be uncollectible. This balance is primarily due to partial payments, insurance denial based on medical necessity, the inability to obtain accurate patient and/or insurance information, and patients without medical coverage or high deductibles. Staff recommends the amount deemed uncollectible be written-off the County's general ledger. Countywide (SB)


**Background and Justification:** In March 1995, Fire-Rescue began transporting patients and charging ambulance fees for this service. Fire Rescue's billing efforts are designed to meet the federal requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The law requires that the County make reasonable attempts to collect monies from all patients regardless of the availability of insurance, to the maximum allowed under Federal and State guidelines and does not allow for the routine waiver of unpaid co-payments or deductibles, unless certain requirements are met. Based on these efforts, Fire Rescue collected 64% of net charges to-date for this write-off period.

**(continued on Page 3)**

**Attachments:**

1. Emergency Transport Billing Write-Off Summary for Period October 2016 - September 2017
2. Detail Listing of Uncollectible Accounts by Transport Month for Period October 2016 - September 2017

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Recommended by:		8/25/21
	Assistant Fire Chief	Date
Approved by:		8/25/21
	Fire Rescue Administrator	Date
Approved by:		9/8/21
	County Administrator	Date



(continued from Page 1)

The \$13,656,723.07 is the outstanding balance after adjustments are applied to patient accounts. Primarily, adjustments are the difference between the Fire-Rescue billing rate and the maximum reimbursement allowed by Medicare and Medicaid. The County's rate is set higher than Medicare's maximum allowable in order to collect the maximum reimbursement, thereby creating an automatic Medicare adjustment. An increase in adjustments will occur whenever the Board approves a rate increase in excess of Medicare allowable rates for reimbursement.

The following provides some examples as to why the \$13,656,723.07 is uncollectible:

- Partial Payment - received payment from third party carrier, but patient did not have supplemental insurance and has not paid balance.
- Payment denied based on medical necessity - Fire Rescue's decision to transport an injured or ill patient is based on quality of patient care as determined by the paramedic/Medical Director, not on the likelihood of a successful collection. In some cases, patient did not pay account.
- Billing agent unable to obtain accurate/sufficient patient information.
- Patients had no insurance, co-insurance, or had not met their deductible.