Billing for healthcare services is a puzzle to many people in the United States; finding out what care costs in the emergency room might be the most difficult puzzle of all. Patients have reported exorbitantly expensive charges for emergency room services—even when those services were declined—while administrators point out the significant costs of maintaining medical teams ready for any situation that comes through the door. What information do patients need to avoid unexpected bills in the ER? How can individual providers advocate for patients and help them navigate a complex system? How might hospitals and health systems respond to stories of billing practices that may dissuade people from seeking medical care in an emergency?

Two background readings for this session are found at:
