

Statement from St. David's HealthCare:

St. David's HealthCare is committed to providing compassionate care to every patient, and we understand the frustration patients experience when their health insurance policies place a large portion of the financial responsibility directly on the patient.

Austin Independent School District benefit-eligible employees are offered narrow network plans administered by Aetna. One of the disadvantages of a narrow network plan is that patients have limited access to all providers within the community. St. David's HealthCare has expressed interest to Aetna in being added as an in-network provider for these narrow network plans, but at this time, St. David's HealthCare facilities are not included.

When a patient presents to one of our hospitals in need of medical care, our first priority is to stabilize the patient. Once the patient is stable, insurance benefits are verified. If it is determined that our hospital is out of network for the patient's health insurance plan, we work to transfer the patient to an in-network facility. In emergency situations, however, this is not always possible because the patient's health must come first.

Aetna has chosen to provide a narrow network product, which restricts patient choice, and therefore can potentially place a heavy financial burden on the patient. While we did everything right in this particular situation, the structure of the patient's insurance plan as a narrow network product placed a large portion of the financial responsibility directly on the patient because our hospital was not in-network with the patient's insurance plan. We understand the hardship this can present. As such, we offer up to a 100% discount, depending on a patient's household income, and we work with all patients needing financial assistance to help determine their eligibility for this discount. We are in contact with Mr. Calver about this and are helping him through the process to determine the appropriate discount.