AN ACT authorizing the County to establish charges to recover costs generated by providing emergency medical services; defining certain terms; requiring a certain reimbursement; providing for certain waivers; providing that out-of-pocket payments for emergency medical services shall not be required from certain individuals; requiring the County Council to adopt by Resolution a Rate schedule; authorizing the County Executive to adopt certain regulations; and generally relating to the Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program.
Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By adding:

Title 17 – Public Protection Services.
Subtitle 1 – Fire and Rescue Services.

Section 17.112. Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program.

Title 17. Public Protection Services.
Subtitle 1. Fire and Rescue Services.

Section 17.112. Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program.

(A) Obligation to Provide Care and Transport; Prohibited Conduct.

(1) The Fire and Rescue Service must provide emergency medical services care and transport under applicable medical protocols to all individuals without regard to the individual's ability to pay or the individual’s insurance coverage.

(2) Any personnel of the Fire and Rescue Service who respond to a request for emergency medical services may not ask for any information relating to an individual's insurance coverage during the provision of emergency medical services.

(B) Definitions. In this Section, the following terms have the meanings as indicated:

(1) Charge means the Emergency Medical Services Reimbursement Charge.

(2) Emergency Medical Services means emergency medical care, transportation, or both emergency medical care and transportation, provided by the Fire and Rescue Service for an individual.

(3) Federal Poverty Guidelines means the applicable health care poverty guidelines published in the Federal Register or otherwise issued by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.
(4) **Fire and Rescue Service** means the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and includes volunteer fire and rescue corporations recognized by Section 17.103 of this Code.

(5) **Program** means the Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program.

(C) **Imposition of Charge.** The County may:

1. Impose a charge for emergency medical services provided in the County by the Fire and Rescue Service; and
2. Enter a mutual aid agreement with other jurisdictions regarding the collection of charges.

(D) **Liability for Charge.** An individual who receives emergency medical services:

1. Except as provided in subsection (E) or (F), is responsible for payment of the charge;
2. Shall provide information requested by the County including, without limitation, information related to the individual’s insurance coverage; and
3. Shall assign insurance benefits to the County for the payment of the charge covered and reimbursed by the individual’s insurance company.

(E) **Uninsured Portion of the Charge.** A county resident shall not be required to pay any out-of-pocket expense relating to any emergency medical services provided because the resident is deemed to have paid any co-payment, deductible, or uninsured portion of the cost of emergency medical services through taxes paid to the County.

(F) **Hardship Waiver.**

1. Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the County shall waive the charge for any individual whose household income is at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. An individual must request a waiver on a form approved by the County.
(2) The county may deny a request for a waiver if the individual who claims financial hardship under this subsection does not furnish all the information required by the county.

(G) Use of revenue and collection of funds. Revenues collected by the program shall be:

(i) Collected and processed in accordance with fiscal procedures established or approved by the Howard County Department of Finance for the collection, disbursement, and accounting of funds;

(ii) Deposited into the fire and rescue fund, with appropriations being made through the annual budget and appropriation ordinance.

(H) Rate schedule. The County Council shall adopt by resolution a rate schedule that shall be based on the cost of providing emergency medical services and may be adjusted annually based on inflation, as measured by an index reasonably related to the cost of providing emergency medical services.

(I) Regulations. The County Executive may adopt regulations to implement the program.

Section 2. And be it further enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.
This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on April 5, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on ____________, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on ____________, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on ____________, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on ____________, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on ____________, 2019.

Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council