Medicare won’t cover rural advanced ambulance corps coverage, Hinchey seeks to change that

WASHINGTON – Medicare beneficiaries are not covered if their residences are serviced by local volunteer ambulance corps and advanced life support services are warranted and called in, and Congressman Maurice Hinchey is trying to have that changed.

In January of last year, Ina Gage of Pine Bush called for an ambulance because of severe chest pains. A volunteer ambulance arrived, but because of the severity of the case, an advanced life support service team was brought in. She required similar services six months later and wound up getting a bill for $1,300.

Hinchey interceded and eventually the charges were covered.

The lawmaker has asked the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services Director Donald Berwick to change the policy to cover seniors in rural areas. He has tried for years to have the issue straightened out, but so far legislative efforts to address the lack of coverage for advanced life support intercept services have not gone through. So, he is seeking an administrative decision to address the problem.

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