

UnitedHealthcare delays new policy on emergency department visits

June 11 2021



Under intense pressure, UnitedHealthcare says it will wait until the

COVID-19 pandemic is over before implementing a new policy to stop paying for emergency department visits that it considers nonurgent.

It had announced a few days ago that the [new policy](#) would take effect next month, but faced significant backlash from several major hospital and doctor groups, *The New York Times* reported.

"Plain and simple, this is a very misguided [policy](#) that could have a chilling effect for people going to the [emergency room](#)," Rick Pollack, the chief executive of the American Hospital Association, said earlier this week.

In a letter to UnitedHealthcare's chief executive, he urged the giant insurer to reverse the new policy and said the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the risks of discouraging patients from seeking care.

"This is dangerous for patients' health at any [time](#), but is particularly unsafe in the midst of a public health emergency," Pollack said, *The Times* reported.

"Based on feedback from our provider partners and discussions with medical societies, we have decided to delay the implementation of our emergency department policy until at least the end of the national public health emergency period," UnitedHealthcare said in a statement issued Thursday.

More information: [The New York Times Article](#)

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