



[» Click Here to Print This Page «](#)

## Study: High Ambulance Fees May Lead to Delayed Care

**Posted:** May 17th, 2010 05:13 PM GMT-05:00

**Story by** [thedenverchannel.com](http://thedenverchannel.com)

DENVER --

The issue of money and medicine is difficult for many Colorado families and some are left to choose between paying medical bills and buying food.

That is information bolstered by a recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, which showed the uninsured and those with significant financial concerns delayed calling for emergency medical help by an average of 6 hours.

"I was concerned because of the situation," said 62 year-old Andrzej Kurek. He was describing a day he had fainted.

"You'd been unemployed for a while, so money was a concern wasn't it?" asked CALL7 Investigator Tony Kovaleski.

"Yeah, money was a big concern," said Kurek.

The concern was so intense Kurek and his wife said they considered driving to the hospital instead of taking an ambulance.

Records from West Metro Fire show the Kureks are not alone and the number of patients calling 911, and then declining to take the ambulance to the hospital, is at a three-year high.

"I hesitated due to the cost," said Kurek until he said he was told the cost for taking a West Metro ambulance would be around \$600.

"They told you it was going to be \$600? What did the bill say when you got it?" asked Kovaleski.

"The bill was more than double of that amount," said Kurek.

In fact, the bill was \$1,398.

"If they would have told you it was going to be \$1,400 would you have made that same decision?" asked Kovaleski.

"Probably not, probably not," said Kurek's wife, Theresa.