

HB 432 -- WILLING PROVIDERS OF HEALTHCARE

SPONSOR: Schaaf

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Healthcare Facilities by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill prohibits health insurers, the Missouri Medicaid Program, and the federal Medicare Program from discriminating against any provider located within the geographic coverage area of a health benefit plan who is willing to meet the terms and conditions for participation in the plan.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Unknown exceeding \$705,784 in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010. Estimated Cost on Other State Funds of Could exceed \$131,139 in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill provides choice in healthcare to everyone, reduces healthcare costs, improves quality of treatment, and makes sure patients trust their providers. The bill can prevent unnecessary medical tests when a provider knows the patient.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schaaf; Missouri State Medical Association; Dr. Thomas McClain; Missouri State Chiropractors Association; Eastern Missouri Psychiatric Society; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; St. John's Regional Medical Center; Missouri Podiatric Medical Association; Missouri Association of Insurance Agents; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons; Truman Medical Centers; and Missouri Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it doesn't protect patients but lets doctors decide if they will participate in a plan. There are benefits to carriers screening providers' backgrounds and credentials. The bill forces a carrier to take any physician willing to meet the contract terms, raises healthcare costs, and does not require willing provider status for hospitals.

Testifying against the bill were Coventry Health Care; United Healthcare; Aetna, Incorporated; Cigna; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City; Missouri Insurance Coalition; Nancy Giddens, America's Health Insurance Plans; Luxottica Retail; Missouri Hospital Association; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Missouri.