

HB 2270 -- SAFE CARE PROVIDERS

SPONSOR: Cooper

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill allows child abuse medical resource centers and providers receiving training from the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Child Abuse Resource Education (SAFE CARE) network to collaborate to promote improved services to children who are suspected victims of abuse and need a forensic medical examination by providing specialized training for forensic medical evaluations in a hospital, child advocacy center, or by a private health care professional without the need for a collaborative agreement between the child abuse medical resource center and a SAFE CARE provider. The SAFE CARE network must develop recommendations for medically based screening processes and forensic evidence collection for emergency examinations of children who are alleged victims of sexual assault and provide those recommendations to the SAFE CARE providers, child advocacy centers, hospitals, and licensed practitioners who provide these emergency examinations.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill addresses the current problem that rural areas have in finding health care professionals who are appropriately trained to conduct forensic examinations. Most physicians do not have these very specific skills and are not willing to perform the exams because of the liability, time constraints, court appearances, and litigation; and it is often emotional and requires professional commitment. Lack of availability of these specialty physicians could place children in rural areas in possible harm from not receiving the proper services when there is suspected abuse. The bill allows existing forensic examiner providers who typically reside in metropolitan areas to collaborate with rural health service providers who do not have access to this specialty.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cooper; Jay Wood, Missouri KidsFirst; Dr. Samuel Brayfield; St. Louis Children's Hospital; and Dr. Authur Freeland.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.