

HCS HB 617 -- HEALTH CARE TRANSPARENCY

SPONSOR: Frederick

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill establishes the Health Care Cost Reduction and Transparency Act that requires each health care provider licensed in Missouri to make available to the public and on its Internet website the most current price information required under these provisions in a manner that is easily understood by the public.

Beginning with the quarter ending June 30, 2016, and quarterly thereafter, each health care provider licensed in Missouri must provide specified information about the 25 most frequently reported health care services or procedures. A health care provider must not be required to report the information required by these provisions if the reporting of that information reasonably could lead to the identification of the person or persons admitted to the hospital in violation of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) or other federal law. Beginning with the quarter ending September 30, 2016, and quarterly thereafter, the bill requires hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers make available to the public information on the total cost of the 25 most common surgical procedures and the 20 most common imaging procedures, by volume, performed in hospital or outpatient settings or in ambulatory surgical settings including the related current procedural terminology and health care common procedure coding system codes.

Upon request of a patient for the cost of a particular health care service or procedure, imaging procedure, or surgery procedure reported under these provisions, a health care provider must provide the information to the patient in writing, either electronically or by mail, within three business days after receiving the request.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that health care cost reduction and transparency is the goal of the legislation. It is very hard for a patient to obtain the actual cost of a procedure or service prior to receiving the procedure or service. It is also hard for physicians to get price information. The current health care system is like buying a car but not knowing the price until you go to drive it off the lot. Health care consumers should be able to know the cost and quality of procedures and services and compare. The bill seeks to require the posting of common procedures and

permit requests for costs of procedures not posted. The bill is a framework that can be modified and improved by stakeholders. Health care is usually the largest expense or purchase in a person's life other than the purchase of a home.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Frederick; Associated Industries of Missouri; St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition; Joel James; and Missouri Ambulatory Surgery Center Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there is not enough transparency required in the legislation. The bill is limited to hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers, not all health care providers. Transparency requirements shouldn't single out only a few providers while also ignoring insurers. What people really want to know is what the costsharing portion is, meaning what the patient will have to pay out of pocket. It is duplicative to allow requests and require the information to be available on the Department of Health and Senior Services website; it should be either or, not both.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri Hospital Association.