

HB 1659 -- MO HEALTHNET REIMBURSEMENT

SPONSOR: Frederick

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health Insurance by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Insurance by a vote of 11 to 0.

Beginning July 1, 2016, and subject to appropriations, this bill requires the MO HealthNet Division within the Department of Social Services to reimburse eligible providers, including psychologists, of behavioral, social, and psychophysiological services, including psychologists, for the prevention, treatment, or management of physical health problems. A provider must be reimbursed utilizing the specified behavior assessment and intervention reimbursement codes or their successor codes under the Current Procedural Terminology coding system maintained by the American Medical Association.

This bill is similar to HB 672 (2015).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that billing codes trigger payment for services and there is currently a gap in MO HealthNet coverage where psychological and counseling services for medical conditions are not covered. Counseling for medical conditions makes technical medicine effective because most chronic illnesses have a significant lifestyle component that must also be addressed. The listed billing codes are currently reimbursed by Medicare, Veterans Affairs, and private insurance plans. Adding the billing codes will allow for integrated medicine and integrated care and will allow treatment to begin as soon as it is needed rather than waiting for behavioral issues to become strictly mental health issues before treatment begins.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Frederick; Missouri Academy Of Family Physicians; Paul T. Kate, PhD; Mary Weatherford; Adam Andreassen, Midwest Assessment And Psychotherapy Solutions; and the Missouri Psychological Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.