

HB 395 -- LONG-TERM CARE TRANSITION GRANTS

SPONSOR: Nance

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Senior Citizen Advocacy by a vote of 12 to 0.

Currently, MO HealthNet participants with disabilities transitioning from nursing homes back into the community are eligible for a one-time grant of up to \$1,500 to offset costs associated with housing a person with disabilities. Subject to appropriations, this bill increases the grant amount to \$2,400, allows senior citizens to be eligible for the grant, and moves grant administration from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the Division of Senior and Disability Services within the Department of Health and Senior Services in consultation with the Department of Social Services.

The bill also changes the responsibility for developing information and training on community-based service options for residents transitioning into the community to the departments of Health and Senior Services and Mental Health.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that it is important to increase the MO Health Net benefits to help more people transition out of a nursing home facility and back into their home. The bill allows an individual to receive in home health services and also to be able to be integrated into the community. It will be a cost savings to the state because the transition grant is far less expensive than nursing home care. The grant is a mechanism to keep the elderly in their homes as long as possible. It has been proven that the elderly need to stay in the least restrictive, most appropriate health care environment to ensure health and happiness. By transitioning persons out of nursing homes, more nursing home beds will be freed up for those individuals with more severe long-term health care needs.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Nance; Patrice Donehue, Silver Haired Legislature; AARP; Missouri Coalition for Quality Care; Missouri Association of Homes for the Aging; Whole Person, Incorporated; and Imre Komaromi, Independent Living Resource Center.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say it creates a method

for providing transition grants so individuals can purchase goods and services to make it easier for them to get back into their home in their community. The bill's language is modified to match the federal provision for the transitioning grant. The grant can be used for the first month's rent, household needs, home modifications, or other things to help them prepare for living in their community. The grant will be subject to appropriations and could help a considerable number of individuals.

Testifying on the bill was Department of Health and Senior Services.