

HCS HB 1210 -- DEBT OFFSETS FOR UNPAID MEDICAL BILLS

SPONSOR: Gatschenberger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Local Government by a vote of 14 to 3.

Currently, the Department of Health and Senior Services processes claims submitted by hospitals and health care providers requesting an offset of income tax refunds to satisfy an outstanding debt owed by a taxpayer. This substitute repeals the provisions regarding the process by which the department requests offsets and authorizes an entity designated as a claim clearinghouse to process and verify requests for an offset for ambulance service providers of taxpayer income tax refunds and lottery winnings to satisfy outstanding debts for ambulance services received. Prior to utilizing the clearinghouse, an ambulance service provider must determine whether the patient is eligible for relief from the claim under the provider's financial hardship policy and if not, the provider must exhaust all available means of collecting the debt from the patient or third-party payer and give certain notices to the patient and allow for various levels of review and appeal of his or her claim. A collection assistance fee allocated between the clearinghouse and the Department of Revenue is assessed to each offset for the costs of collecting the debt. Claims for debts owed to ambulance service providers requesting an offset will receive the least priority as specified in Section 143.789, RSMo.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue Fund of a cost of \$220,167 to an income of Unknown in FY 2013, a cost of \$217,805 to an income of Unknown in FY 2014, and a cost of \$220,031 to an income of Unknown in FY 2015. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that providing another tool for these entities to try to collect debts owed will help relieve some of their financial burdens.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gatschenberger; Sean Hill, Missouri Ambulance Association; Mid America Regional Council; Jason White, Missouri EMS Association; Martin Limpert, St. Charles County Ambulance Service; William Pearman, Chariton County Ambulance District; and Craig Faith, John Knob Village EMS.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.