

HCS HB 400 -- DENTAL CARVE-OUT ACT

SPONSOR: Yates

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Insurance Policy by a vote of 14 to 2.

This substitute establishes the Dental Carve-Out Act of 2005 and requires the Division of Medical Services in the Department of Social Services to maintain and implement a process for managing dental benefits for public assistance recipients. The division must contract with a single-source, private entity to provide dental program management services in coordination with the division. The division is allowed to place coverage limits on dental services and must establish a statewide uniform dental program administered by a single, private entity. The private entity cannot discriminate against any dentist willing to meet the terms and conditions of the program. The division, however, may not require a dentist to alter a patient's previously authorized course of treatment unless warranted by the patient's condition.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$106,363 in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that access to adequate dental care in Missouri is extremely difficult, and the current billing system is archaic and extremely inadequate. The bill will provide a single-program administrator to deal with dental providers. With a single payer contracting with the state, there will be one large panel of providers all receiving reimbursements from the same entity, under the same guidelines, and using the same reimbursement rate. This would eliminate costs, streamlining the system and helping to increase the number of participating providers.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Yates and Moore; Gary Mandernach; Missouri Dental Association; Kevin Wallace; and Doral Dental USA.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that dental carve-out without an increase in fees could be a problem. The objective of the carve-out program is to increase access to dental care by increasing dental participation. It is questionable that this would be achieved without additional money.

Testifying against the bill was Bridgeport Dental Services.

Marc Webb, Legislative Analyst