

HCS HB 39 -- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

SPONSOR: Portwood

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Ticket to Work by a vote of 8 to 0.

This substitute requires the Department of Social Services to determine the eligibility of an employed disabled person requesting medical assistance whose family gross income is less than 250% of the federal poverty level. The substitute:

(1) Requires that an individual meet the definition of a disabled person under the federal Supplemental Security Income Program or of an employed individual with a medically improved disability under the federal Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999;

(2) Requires an individual who has a net income that does not exceed the limit for permanent and totally disabled individuals to receive non-spenddown Missouri Medicaid Program benefits;

(3) Requires any participant whose gross income exceeds 100% of the federal poverty level to pay a premium for participation in this program;

(4) Requires an individual to participate in an employer-sponsored health insurance plan if the department determines that it is more cost effective;

(5) Exempts any income earned through certified extended employment at a sheltered workshop for the purpose of determining eligibility; and

(6) Exempts deposits of up to \$5,000 per year into a medical savings and/or an independent living account from the asset limits for eligibility.

The provisions of the substitute will expire three years from the effective date.

The substitute contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$10,557,555 in FY 2008, \$11,019,547 in FY 2009, and \$11,513,667 in FY 2010. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is important for

employed disabled persons because it offers them an opportunity to escape poverty and to participate in society while maintaining health care coverage. The bill reduces fear associated with returning to work, reduces an employer's fear of hiring a disabled person, and increases self sufficiency. The sheltered workshop income exemption is seen as a benefit, as it reduces an individual's need to choose between working and obtaining medication.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Portwood; National Multiple Sclerosis Society; Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities; Disabled Citizens Alliance for Independence; Edward Duff; Greater St. Louis Parent Association; Missouri Voice of the Retarded; Mental Retardation Association of Missouri; Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers; Wayne Lee, Epilepsy Education Organization; Epilepsy Foundation of the St. Louis Region; Missouri Association for Community Action, Incorporated; Missouri Catholic Conference; and Paraquad, Incorporated.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.