

HCS HB 508 -- HOSPITAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

SPONSOR: Schaaf

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Healthcare Facilities by a vote of 6 to 0.

This substitute requires any hospital, peer review organization, or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations that receives a complaint about hospital care to forward it to the Department of Health and Senior Services. The department is allowed to inquire into any complaint that was not investigated by the forwarding organization. Any organization violating the provisions of the substitute will be fined up to \$500 for the first offense, and the fine for any second or subsequent offense will increase by \$1,000 for each violation.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Greater than \$100,000 in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the state should check into uninvestigated complaints and a fine should be imposed on organizations that don't investigate complaints. Patients want their concerns validated. The regulatory system needs to be responsible for the investigation and review of a patient's chart to make sure that proper care was given.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schaaf; and Elizabeth Schoenlaub.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the scope of the bill is too broad and needs to be focused. If there is a significant number of complaints, problems for the hospital licensure board could result.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri Hospital Association.