

HB 1656 -- TRANSITION GRANTS FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

SPONSOR: Nance

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Special Committee on Senior Citizen Advocacy by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill changes the laws regarding the assistance provided to nursing home residents who are transitioning back into their communities. Subject to appropriations, MO HealthNet-eligible nursing home residents will receive a one-time transition grant up to \$2,400, administered by the Division of Senior and Disability Services within the Department of Health and Senior Services, to spend on housing costs associated with moving a senior citizen or disabled person from a nursing home back to a residence within their community. The division will work with the Department of Social Services to generate additional funding for the transition grants.

The Department of Health and Senior Services and the Department of Mental Health will work in cooperation to develop community-based services for persons who are moving out of nursing homes and back into their communities.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will allow federal funds to provide home and community-based services to help transition nursing home residents back into a community-based facility or a home. Currently, residents receive \$1,500 to pay for rent, utilities, or deposits to move back into a home or community-based setting. The funding to cover the increase will come from a federal three-year grant, and the state does not have to match any funds. However, the bill will provide the statutory authority for the state to continue the program, subject to appropriations, after the three years. The bill will save the state money by decreasing nursing home expenses because those who can live in their homes will have the financial support to do so. The bill will benefit approximately 100 people, including the elderly and individuals with disabilities, with a cost savings to the state of \$18,600 per person per year since the average cost of nursing home care is \$21,000 per year.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Nance; Department of Health and Senior Services; and Southwest Center for Independent Living.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.