

SB 988 -- MEDICAL HELICOPTERS

SPONSOR: Kraus

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 9 to 1.

Under this bill, any rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Health and Senior Services, or any interpretation of such rules, must not require hospitals to have a fence or other barriers around a hospital helipad. Additionally, the department is prohibited from promulgating any rules and regulations with respect to the operation or construction of a helipad located at a hospital. The bill requires hospitals to ensure that helipads are free of obstruction and safe for use by a helicopter while on the ground, during approach, and takeoff.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that fences started showing up around hospital helipads last year. Some are too close to the helipad for a helicopter to land safely. A requirement that helipads be cordoned off at all times was added to regulations promulgated by the department for Segment Elevation Myocardial Infraction (STEMI), Stroke and Trauma center licensure. Supporters say they tried to work with the department to fix the issue but to no avail, thus supporters are looking to make the change via statute.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Kraus; Matthew Benzen; Nancy Rhinehart; Ruby Mayer; Susan D. Crum; Missouri Ambulance Association; BJC Healthcare; and the Mosaic UFC Care.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.