

HCS HB 183 -- MO HEALTHNET WORK REQUIREMENTS

SPONSOR: Trent

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 8 to 4. Motion to "Do Pass" failed by a vote of 3 to 5 by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight. Voted "To Reconsider" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2.

This bill requires a MO HealthNet participant to work, participate in a work program, volunteer, or participate in a workfare program, unless the participant is under 19 years of age, 64 years of age or older, physically or mentally unfit to work, a parent or caretaker of a child under one year of age, a parent or caretaker of a child with a disability, receiving unemployment, or participating in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program.

The Department of Social Services must submit any state plan or waiver necessary, and these provisions will not become effective until approval of the state plan or waiver.

The bill also provides MO HealthNet coverage for individuals who had been recipients of MO HealthNet as participants in the foster care system, up to age 26, who are not eligible for coverage under another mandatory coverage group.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the work provisions in this bill are needed to ensure that all people stay connected to the workforce and other avenues to self-sufficiency. Further, it is reported that only approximately 50 people per year would qualify for the extended coverage for foster care recipients, but it is a benefit much needed by these individuals as they seek to become independent.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Trent; Concerned Women for America of Missouri; and the Opportunity Solutions Project.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that qualifying for MO HealthNet is time-consuming and difficult now, but these added barriers for people who either are working, or are unable to work will cause more people to be dropped from the system. This will result in increased costs to the state, and poorer health for many people.

Testifying against the bill were Planned Parenthood Advocates in Missouri; Empower Missouri; American Cancer Society Action Network;

Missouri Budget Project; Kids Win Missouri; Missouri Catholic Conference; and Tamara Kenny, Catholic Charities of St. Louis.