

HCS HB 941 -- AMBULANCE SERVICES

SPONSOR: Hansen

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Insurance Policy by a vote of 11 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 1.

This bill allows the Department of Health and Senior Services to promulgate rules requiring network service agreements with health insurance carriers in their service areas, as they relate to air ambulance licenses.

The bill specifies that health carriers and managed care plans must pay benefits directly to ground ambulance services. Currently, the law does not specify that the ambulance services must be ground ambulance services.

The bill prohibits an air ambulance provider from soliciting or selling a subscription agreement for their services or for the billing of their services.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill will help to insure that air ambulances negotiate with insurance companies to decrease the costs of using an air ambulance. Sometimes charges are in excess of \$45,000 and when the insurance company only pays \$10,000 of that cost that leaves the patient with a \$35,000 bill. These costs have to come down.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hansen; America's Health Insurance Plans, Missouri Insurance Coalition; and Missouri Healthcare For All.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say these air ambulances are important to help save lives. It costs a lot to offer this service. They are available 24 hours a day every day and this costs money to provide this necessary service. If you start paying the patient directly and they don't pay the air ambulance then the cost for the next person is going to be that much more.

Testifying against the bill were Air Evac; and Air Methods.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that hospitals that have their own air ambulance might have some issues with this.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri Hospital Association.