

HCS HB 2355 -- MO HEALTHNET WAIVER FOR NUTRITION SERVICES

SPONSOR: Jones (88)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 10 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2355.

This bill establishes the "Food is Medicine Act", requiring the Department of Social Services to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, within the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, for a Section 1115 demonstration waiver to implement the "Food is Medicine" program.

The program must be designed to improve health outcomes for MO HealthNet participants with nutrition-related chronic diseases through nutrition services.

The bill specifies the covered nutrition services under this program, and specifies that whenever feasible, the MO HealthNet Division, within the Department of Social Services must prioritize the inclusion of community-based organizations and local growers to support the purchase of locally grown food.

The bill requires the Department of Social Services to promulgate all the necessary rules and regulations for the administration of this bill.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that "food is medicine" is not a slogan, but a new way of thinking of public health. The system has been structured to treat illness after it has appeared, rather than focus on preventive measures, which cost less than treatment efforts. The State has high rates of food insecurity and high rates of disease, and chronic disease is a primary driver of spending. The bill would create a stable and consistent market for locally produced food, strengthening the agricultural economy as well.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Jones; Kids Win Missouri; Adam Saunders, Columbia Centers For Urban Agriculture; Amanda Berry, Empower Missouri; Billy Polansky, Columbia Center For Urban Agriculture; Corrina Smith, Columbia Farmers Market; Lexi Linsenman, Columbia Center For Urban Agriculture; American Heart Association; Kanbe's Markets; Missouri Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics; BJC Healthcare Systems; and Feeding Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.