



THE LOUDON TIMES

Senator John Loudon
Senate District 7

Capitol Building, Room 422
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Contact: Nick Bengston
(573) 751-9763

Ensuring Better Access to Health Care in Missouri

The Missouri Senate this week took several important steps forward in improving health-care law in our state. Senators advanced legislation to keep medical malpractice rates low enough to keep doctors from fleeing the state and to reduce Medicaid fraud by health-care providers.

Senators gave first-round approval to legislation designed to bring down insurance costs for doctors and keep them from moving their practices to other states. Senate Bill 905 requires insurance companies to notify doctors in a timely fashion when rates change. Under the bill, rates are not allowed to be excessive, inadequate or unfairly discriminatory.

SB 905 also requires medical malpractice insurers to report to the Missouri Department of Insurance information on insurance premiums, losses, exposure and other information the director requests. This data will assist the department to monitor marketplace rates, financial solvency, affordability and the availability of medical malpractice insurance. The data collected can be used to assist medical malpractice insurers in developing future rate policies.

This bill is an important addition to legislation passed in 2005 to keep doctors from leaving Missouri for lower rates. SB 905 will do a tremendous service for the medical professionals of our state and all those whom they treat.



Sen. Loudon hard at work on the senate floor.

The Senate also advanced legislation that cracks down on Medicaid fraud. SB 1210, which largely focuses on fraud by health-care providers, strengthens penalties against those who commit Medicaid fraud and offers financial incentives to whistleblowers.

Under the bill, penalties for first-time and repeat offenders are increased, those who defraud the system are prohibited from participating in the system and offenders must serve at least 85 percent of their prison sentence. The bill also implements felony charges against those who willfully obstruct Medicaid-fraud investigations. Further, individuals who come forward to identify instances of Medicaid fraud are allowed to keep a portion of the money recovered from any subsequent investigations.

It has become clear that Medicaid abuse does not only occur among those who receive its benefits. Health-care providers are also responsible for the misuse of taxpayer dollars.

Together, these measures will make needed improvements to Missouri's health-care system.

If you have questions or comments about these issues or any other topic, please call my Capitol office at (573) 751-9763. Thank you for your support.

Quote of the Week

I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there's purpose and worth to each and every life.

~ Ronald Reagan