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that is morally wrong.*

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JEFFERSON CITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Senate Approves Measure to Save Lives by Creating Healthcare Technology Fund**

### ***Sen. Shields Sponsors Bill Focused on Electronic Medical Records***

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO. – The Missouri Senate passed a measure today that would save lives by creating a fund to use more technology in healthcare. Sen. Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, sponsored Senate Bill 858 to create the Healthcare Technology Fund that would provide funding for improving the quality of healthcare Missourians receive by aiding the use of electronic medical records, e-prescribing, tele-medicine and tele-monitoring. Sen. Shields said using technology in healthcare not only saves lives and saves money, but also helps track, in real time, anyone trying to defraud the system.

“The Institute of Medicine says between 44,000 and 98,000 people die each year because of errors in paper medical records and that is an outrage,” Shields said. “Going to electronic medical records and e-prescribing will save lives, improve health and save precious tax dollars by tracking those who steal from the people who really need help.”

The Medicaid Reform Commission recommended that healthcare providers and services in Missouri switch from paper records to electronic records that can more easily follow a patient.

Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, was a member of the commission and said an emphasis must be made on technology in healthcare reform. He gave an example of a family transplanted from New Orleans to Houston by Hurricane Katrina that could go to a Jiffy Lube and know when the oil in their car was last changed, but could not begin to find out when they received their last tetanus shot.

“It is unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that Jiffy Lube is more technologically advanced than our healthcare system,” Gibbons said. “Paper kills and we must move to a system where electronic medical records and e-prescribing are common place.”

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Gibbons said the Senate would also create severe and vicious penalties for anyone who would try to hack into someone's personal electronic medical records.

The fund would be created as soon as the bill is signed into law because it includes an emergency clause. Gov. Matt Blunt has recommended \$25 million of the state budget to be dedicated to the fund.

The bill next goes to the House of Representatives where it will receive similar consideration.

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\*\* The Medicaid Reform Commission's recommendations report was issued December and can be read online at:

[www.senate.mo.gov/medicaidreform](http://www.senate.mo.gov/medicaidreform)

\*\*\*Audio clips in .mp3 format of Senate floor debate on SB 858 can be found on the Missouri Senate Newsroom Audio/Video webpage under "Daily Cuts":

[www.senate.state.mo.us/05info/press-room/radio.html](http://www.senate.state.mo.us/05info/press-room/radio.html)