



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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Senate Grants Initial Approval to Koster's Bill Targeting Medicaid-Provider Fraud

JEFFERSON CITY— The Senate today gave first-round approval to a bill sponsored by Sen. Chris Koster, R-Cass, reining in Medicaid provider fraud.

Many experts believe that as much as \$575 million of taxpayer money is bilked from the Medicaid system each year due to fraud committed by medical providers who participate in the state-funded health-care program. Examples of common fraud include overstating the number of hours devoted to Medicaid recipients and billing Medicaid multiple times for the same service or for prescriptions that the patients never ordered.

“I can think of no crime more disgusting than stealing from the poor,” Koster said. “By disciplining those who do not play by the rules, we can better ensure that Medicaid is used for its intended purposes, rather than to further line the pockets of corrupt Medicaid kingpins.”

Among its many provisions, Senate Bill 1210 increases to a Class C felony the crime of defrauding the Medicaid system, requires convicted felons to serve at least 85 percent of their sentence before they are eligible for parole and permanently bans perpetrators from participating in the program in the future.

The bill also aims to encourage whistleblowers to come forward by offering them 20 to 35 percent of the money recovered in the case. Furthermore, the measure protects the employment status of inside informers, as well as shields providers from false accusations by sealing the suit until the attorney general can reach a conclusion about the allegations.

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“Our state’s poorest citizens have a right to quality care from honest providers, and this legislation will help recipients and providers get what they deserve,” Koster said. “Strengthening the penalties against those who cheat the Medicaid system and offering incentives for reporting fraud will help us weed out providers whose personal greed overshadows their commitment to saving lives.”

The bill must receive a final round of approval from the Senate before moving to the House where it will receive similar consideration.

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