



State Senator Harry Kennedy

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PRESS RELEASE



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Sen. Kennedy Expands Reach of Women's Healthcare

Kennedy's Provisions Incorporated Into Omnibus Legislation Replacing Medicaid

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Harry Kennedy, D-St. Louis, yesterday successfully incorporated legislation extending family planning and cancer screening services to as many as 90,000 women into an omnibus healthcare bill advancing in the Senate.

“This broadening of healthcare coverage is an important and significant change in direction compared to actions in the recent past,” Sen. Kennedy said, referring to drastic eligibility cuts made by the Republican-led Legislature in 2005. “The fact that my coverage expansion language was adopted with support from both sides of the aisle this week indicates a positive change in philosophy on healthcare delivery.”

“This is probably money well spent,” said Senate Majority Floor Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, following the Senate’s adoption of Sen. Kennedy’s provision.

Sen. Kennedy’s initiative broadens healthcare coverage parameters for women earning up to \$18,889 who seek counseling on family planning issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and birth control and testing. Cancer screening procedures like pelvic exams and PAP tests are also covered under Sen. Kennedy’s language, which he offered Wednesday as an amendment to legislation (SB 577) revamping the state’s current Medicaid program. The Senate adopted an expanded version of Sen. Kennedy’s amendment and soon after gave the entire bill an initial-passing vote. A second passing Senate vote moves the healthcare bill to the House for similar consideration.

“While I might not be entirely pleased with all aspects of the omnibus bill, I’m very glad to have played a part in re-broadening the healthcare coverage net and am optimistic that my colleagues in the House will show the same support for women’s healthcare demonstrated in the Senate this week,” Sen. Kennedy said.

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