



*Nothing is politically right  
that is morally wrong.*

**MISSOURI SENATE**  
JEFFERSON CITY

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is the firmest friend of truth.*

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## **Help for Working Families to Buy Health Insurance *Plus Patients' Right to Know of Quality and Cost of Healthcare***

JEFFERSON CITY – Missouri families earning low incomes are a step closer to available, affordable healthcare with the Missouri Senate's initial approval of Senate Bill 1283, sponsored by Sen. Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles. The bill, known as the Missouri Health Transformation Act, takes a big step to providing health insurance to 200,000 of Missouri's 770,000 uninsured. The measure would pay the premiums for health insurance for working parents who earn up to the federal poverty level, or \$21,200 for a family of four. Custodial parents earning up to 225 percent of the poverty level, or \$47,700 for a family of four, could have their health premiums paid for if they contribute a percentage of their income based on a sliding scale, totaling no more than \$1,000 a year, into a Health Savings Account. Dempsey said any remaining HSA money would carry to the next year.

"Everyone deserves to be healthy," Dempsey said. "That's why we want to make health insurance more affordable and portable to low-income families so they can use preventive services and stay healthy, rather than go to the costly emergency room as a last resort after they are sick."

The bill would also launch a web-based primary care access pilot project and telehealth (phone-based) practitioners, stressing primary and preventive care rather than emergency room use. Individuals would be able to fully deduct any contributions they make to a health savings account.

It also requires \$5 million a year from the tobacco settlement Missouri receives to go toward tobacco cessation programs.

It encourages more coordination between state departments by creating a Health Cabinet that would oversee the Missouri HealthNet Oversight Committee. It would also create a Health Policy Council that would study trends in healthcare and report to the legislature and governor.

Plus, five businesses a year could be designated as "Missouri Healthy Workplaces" for promoting healthy environments and wellness programs.

It also sets guidelines for insurers to publicly assess and compare the price and quality of health care services, bringing transparency to the healthcare industry for consumers.

Senate Leader Mike Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, says transparency is an important part of the bill.

"We want to put patients back in the driver's seat when it comes to making healthcare decisions for their family," he said. "Arming people with the knowledge of how much the care costs and the quality of the doctor and facility is the best way to making healthcare consumer driven."

The measure must receive a second vote of approval before moving to the House for similar consideration. To learn more about the bill, visit [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) and search SB1283.

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