



PRESS RELEASE

State Senator Wes Shoemyer – 18th District

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SEN. SHOEMYER AMENDS BILL TO EXPAND MO HEALTHNET OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE *Rural Interests Now Represented On Oversight Committee*

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator Wes Shoemyer, D-Clarence, today successfully amended a healthcare bill moving through the Missouri Senate to expand the membership of the MO HealthNet Oversight Committee, which oversees implementation of the state health care program for low-income Missourians. Sen. Shoemyer this year sponsors Senate Bill 170, which was amended onto Senate Bill 549 during Senate debate today.

Sen. Shoemyer's measure expands the membership of the MO HealthNet Oversight Committee by adding an optometrist, a nurse, a mental health professional, a licensed physical therapist, as well as representatives from a not-for-profit health network serving rural counties. Sen. Shoemyer's bill also adds representatives from the state association representing the majority of the long-term care facilities licensed in Missouri, the durable medical equipment industry, a Medicaid managed care organization, a rural health clinic and a federally qualified health clinic. Shoemyer's bill also requires the Oversight Committee to have three patient advocates rather than two, with one representing children, one representing the disabled and the third representing the elderly community. Finally, instead of designating two primary care physicians and two physicians on the committee, Sen. Shoemyer's bill specifies the committee include four licensed physicians – two each from rural and urban areas and board certified in their specialty.

“I think it's important to make sure the committee that oversees our state health care system includes a wide range of people who represent all walks of life from all parts of Missouri,” Sen. Shoemyer said. “In rural parts of our state we have fewer physicians and patients often have to travel further to a health care facility to receive care, and I just want to make sure the Oversight Committee takes those kinds of issues into consideration when setting health care policy.”

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The underlying bill, Senate Bill 549, establishes the MO HealthNet data transparency program, which requires the MO HealthNet Division to implement a program to provide non-aggregated data on MO HealthNet participants on its website, subject to HIPAA privacy requirements. The information will be presented in an easily accessible format, understandable to the public, for those interested in improving the quality of care provided to people eligible for services and programs under the MO HealthNet program, such as researchers, health care providers and those targeting waste and fraud under the healthcare program.

Senate Bill 549 needs a final vote in the Senate before moving to the House for consideration.

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