

Coalition cheers Health Insurance Rate Review bill passage

May 10, 2016

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The House followed the Senate’s unanimous approval of SB 865, sponsored by Sen. David Sater, with a 140-6 vote, moving the “Health Insurance Rate Review” bill to the Governor’s desk on Tuesday.



In addition to rate review, the bill will modify provisions regarding licenses issued by the Board of Pharmacy and covered prescription benefits, delineates procedures for PBMs with regards to MAC lists, and requires health carriers to offer medication synchronization services.

The advancement was cheered by Missouri Health Care for All (MHCFA), who believe the bill will bring more transparency to insurance premiums.

“Until now, Missouri has been the only state in the country where our Department of Insurance has no authority to review or publish the premiums being charged by health insurance companies,” said Jen Bersdale, MHCFA executive director. “Without this basic transparency, consumers have no way of determining whether the rates they are being charged are fair.”

Professor Sidney Watson, the Jane and Bruce Robert Professor of Law at Saint Louis University’s Center for Health Law Studies and a Missouri Health Care for All Board Member, pointed out that Missouri families are suffering under high premiums, especially in certain parts of the state.

“Our analysis of plans being sold in the Health Insurance Marketplace determined that while rates have risen an average of 6% nationally over the last two years, they have risen 24% in Missouri. In addition, rates are significantly different across Missouri, with consumers paying as much as \$100 more each month in Hannibal and West Plains than they would in St. Louis or Kansas City. Rate review would help us shed light on the reasons for these variances and what we can do to address them.”

The coalition was proud to be able to work on the bill with bipartisan supporters.

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“There were rate review bills sponsored by Reps. Charlie Davis, Bill White, and Margo McNeill,” said Sarah Gentry, Policy Director for the coalition. “We were delighted to work together with all three representatives to advance this issue, and we applaud them for their leadership and collaboration.”

Crystal Brigman Mahaney, MHCFA’s Deputy Director, noted grassroots supporters from across the state have spoken out in support of rate review for years.

“Our members understand that transparency is the first step to bringing down the high cost of premiums for Missouri families,” said Mahaney. “Hundreds of Missouri Health Care for All supporters have voiced their support for rate review by calling, e-mailing and meeting with their legislators, as well as by writing letters to the editor and educating their friends and neighbors.”

Bersdale urged the Governor to sign the bill without delay.



Bersdale