
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2004

Brief Description: Providing spoken language interpreters for medical appointments when the original spoken language interpreter fails to appear.

Sponsors: Representatives Dufault and Schmick.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a medical provider to provide its own spoken language interpreter and be reimbursed at the same rate as the contracted interpreter would have received if an assigned spoken language interpreter contracted by the state fails to appear for a scheduled medical appointment.

Hearing Date: 1/27/22

Staff: Christopher Blake (786-7392).

Background:

For medical appointments under the state's Medicaid program, a participating health care provider may request in-person interpretation services for Medicaid-enrolled patients for covered services. The interpretation services are provided through a coordinating entity that connects health care providers with an approved interpreter. Interpreters are reimbursed according to a rate negotiated under a collective bargaining agreement with the Governor. If a health care provider requests an interpreter through the coordinating entity and the coordinating entity is not able to provide an interpreter in a timely manner, the health care provider may obtain its own interpreter and submit a request for reimbursement for some of the incurred costs.

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) provides in-person interpreter services for

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medical appointments for injured workers and crime victims. Health care providers may schedule interpretation services through a third party entity which enrolls approved interpreters. Interpreters are reimbursed by the third party entity according to a fee schedule established by the Department.

Summary of Bill:

If an assigned spoken language interpreter fails to appear for a scheduled medical appointment, a medical provider may provide its own spoken language interpreter and be reimbursed at the same rate that the assigned interpreter would have received. The policy overrides any conflicting public employee collective bargaining laws.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2002.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.