



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
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House Bill 4555 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative David M. Gubow House
Committee: Health Policy
Senate Committee: Health Policy and Senior Citizens

Date Completed: 3-29-95

RATIONALE

Public Act 384 of 1994, which will take effect on March 30, 1995, amends the Public Health Code to expand the scope of practice of optometrists, by allowing them to prescribe and administer certain therapeutic drugs. Previously, optometrists were allowed to use only two specific drugs that are applied for diagnostic purposes. Since the Insurance Code requires a policy to offer reimbursement for all services within a licensed optometrist's lawful scope of practice, if the policy includes optometric coverage, there was some concern that Public Act 384 could result in increased costs for employers who provide health care insurance. Consequently, Public Act 384 was tie-barred to a series of bills designed to exempt third party health insurance payers--including health maintenance organizations, workers' compensation insurers, and prudent purchaser organizations--from having to pay for the expanded optometric services allowed by Public Act 384. These bills were enacted as Public Acts 436 through 440 of 1994. Public Act 437, however, which pertains to workers' compensation, was tie-barred to Senate Bill 493. That bill proposed to expand the scope of practice of chiropractors and was not enacted. Since Public Act 437 therefore cannot take effect, it has been suggested that the workers' compensation amendment be re-enacted.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Worker's Disability Compensation Act to specify that an employer would not be required to reimburse or cause to be reimbursed charges for an optometric service unless the service was included in the definition of "practice of optometry" under the Public Health Code (MCL 333.17401), as of May 20, 1992.

MCL 418.315

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The bill simply would complete legislative efforts to ensure that employers are not subjected to increased health care costs as a result of optometrists' expanded scope of practice under Public Act 384 of 1994. The legislation does not change the required payments for optometric services as they were previously defined.

Legislative Analyst: S. Margules

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would not have an administrative or financial impact on the Department of Labor or on local governmental units. There could be a slight savings in workers' disability compensation insurance premiums, to the extent that claimants have sought reimbursement for optometric services, but savings would not be significant or discernible in most cases.

Fiscal Analyst: K. Lindquist

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.