

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6453

As Passed House:
March 5, 2014

Title: An act relating to verification of hours worked through electronic timekeeping by area agencies on aging and home care agencies.

Brief Description: Concerning verification of hours worked through electronic timekeeping by area agencies on aging and home care agencies.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Senators Dammeier and Keiser; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/24/14, 2/26/14 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/14, 95-2.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Discontinues the verification of worker time sheets by area agencies on aging once the state electronic payment system is available for individual providers to record their hours.
- Excepts home care agencies from requirements to use electronic timekeeping to verify in-home personal care or respite services in circumstances in which electronic verification is not possible.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, G. Hunt, Jinkins, Manweller, Morrell, Rodne, Ross, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) contracts with area agencies on aging to provide case management services to consumers receiving home and community services in their own home. Case management responsibilities are set in statute and include the following: verification that individual providers have met training requirements, are performing their duties, and have passed background checks; monitoring a plan of care to verify that it meets the needs of the consumer; and verifying worker time sheets. The verification of worker time sheets requires area agencies on aging to verify a sample of paper time sheets kept by the individual providers who provide personal care services to clients.

Home care agencies provide home care services to individuals in their places of residence. Home care services are non-medical services and assistance provided to ill, disabled, or vulnerable individuals to allow them to remain in their residences. These services include personal care for the individual, homemaker assistance with household tasks, respite care assistance and support for the family, and other non-medical services or delegated nursing tasks.

Starting July 1, 2010, the DSHS has been prohibited from paying a home care agency for in-home personal care or respite services if the home care agency does not verify the agency employee hours by electronic timekeeping. The 2013-15 State Omnibus Operating Appropriations Act authorized the DSHS to establish exemptions to electronic timekeeping requirements for home care agencies to address situations in which a landline is not available.

Summary of Bill:

The case management responsibilities of area agencies on aging related to verifying worker time sheets continues until the state electronic payment system is available for individual providers to record their hours.

An exception is established to the prohibition on the DSHS from paying home care agencies if they do not verify employee hours electronically. The exception applies in circumstances in which the home care agency verifies that electronic verification is not possible.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill allows the DSHS to transition smoothly from a paper system to an electronic system and allows flexibility for home care agencies and area agencies on aging. A new electronic system will be available in 2015 which will allow individual providers to electronically report hours of work and eliminate the need for area agencies on aging to verify a sample of paper time sheets. This bill will assure that there are not duplicative processes to verify hours of work. Although every home care agency has adopted methods of

electronic timekeeping, there are many legitimate reasons that agencies may be unable to use those electronic systems, such as in the event of a power outage, timekeeping system outage, or unavailability of landlines. Not doing this could have negative consequences in the event of a federal audit if hours are not strictly accounted for electronically.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Bea Rector, Department of Social and Health Services; and Jerry Reilly, Elder Care Alliance and Homecare Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.