

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Burns: Medicaid State Plan to Cover Hospice Services in 2009



State House Okays Bill Requiring State Medicaid Plan to Cover Hospice Services for Terminally Ill Patients

The state House of Representatives has given final legislative approval to a bill that will require the Medicaid state plan to cover hospice services to low-income terminally ill patients in 2009, state Representative Ron Burns, who cosponsored the measure, said today.

The bill, which was forwarded to Governor M. Jodi Rell to be signed into law, will take effect January 1, 2009, said Representative Burns, R-77th District.

“Hospice care provides terminally ill patients with medical treatment and other end-of-life services to keep their morale up and make the time left to them as comfortable as possible,” Representative Burns said. “Unfortunately, the current Medicaid state plan does not cover hospice care for the less fortunate. This legislation will close that gap in coverage for low-income people under age 65, enabling them to live out the rest of their lives with dignity and free of undue discomfort.”

Currently, the state provides Medicaid-funded home health care services but not the full range of hospice-type benefits required by state plan services.

Medicaid state plan coverage for hospice services is based on the Medicare benefit, which is available to people who are enrolled in Medicare Part A. Congress added the benefit to Medicaid in 1985 to help low-income individuals who were under 65 and not eligible for Medicare get the benefits.