

House Bill 1081 (Health Facilities - Hospitals - Medical Debt Protection)

First Reader, Proposed Amendments

AMENDMENT 1

Replace the term “eligible for free care on the date of the service” with the term “ELIGIBLE FOR FREE CARE OR REDUCED CARE ON OR AFTER THE DATE OF THE SERVICE” throughout the bill.

Rationale: We believe this change is necessary to give full effect to House Bill 1420’s provisions that prohibit time limits on consumer financial assistance applications and increase a hospital’s notice and communication requirements about financial assistance policies (FAP), and to this bill’s remedial provisions.

AMENDMENT 2

Replace the term “outside collection agency” with the term “DEBT COLLECTOR” throughout the bill.

Rationale: “Debt collector” is a broader term than “collection agency.” Compare, Consumer Debt Collection Act, Md. Code Ann., Com. Law § 14-201(b) with Md. Code Ann., Business Reg., Title 7.

AMENDMENT 3

On page 6, line 7, after “DAYS.” Insert “COMPLAINED ABOUT HOSPITAL BILLING ERRORS.”

Rationale: Consumers frequently complain about hospital billing errors and the way hospitals make adverse reports or delegate to debt collectors before the complaints are finally resolved.

AMENDMENT 4

On page 4, in line 2, strike “FREE OR”

Rationale: Hospitals should not attempt to collect a debt from a patient who is eligible for free care.