A BILL FOR AN ACT

Concerning healthcare provider liens related to charges for medical care provided to a person injured as a result of the negligence or wrongful acts of another person.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill establishes requirements for the creation of a healthcare provider lien. A healthcare provider lien is a lien related to charges for medical care provided to a person injured by the negligence or wrongful
act of another person, which is asserted against money the injured person may receive from a personal injury claim or uninsured motorist claim. A healthcare provider or healthcare provider's assignee creating a lien must advise the injured person of their options for payment, including the use of benefits from an insurance plan or other payer of benefits, before or at the time of creating the lien. The lien amount cannot include any additional amounts over the amount of the charges for services provided, billed at the provider's usual and customary rates.

A healthcare provider may assign a lien to another person or entity. The fact of the assignment, its terms, and the amount paid by the assignee is not discoverable or admissible as evidence in any third-party or first-party action.

The provisions of the bill do not apply to hospital liens.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add article 27.5 to title 38 as follows:

ARTICLE 27.5

Medical Provider Liens

38-27.5-101. Legislative declaration. (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(a) RESIDENTS OF THE STATE WHO ARE INJURED AS THE RESULT OF THE NEGLIGENCE OR WRONGFUL ACTS OF ANOTHER PERSON SHOULD RECEIVE TIMELY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR THEIR INJURIES, EVEN IF THEY HAVE LIMITED OR NO HEALTH INSURANCE;

(b) HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS SOMETIMES PROVIDE MEDICAL SERVICES AND CARE TO INJURED PERSONS AND AGREE TO DELAYED PAYMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR A LIEN ON ANY SETTLEMENT FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE INJURED PERSON FROM A PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM ASSERTED AGAINST THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY;

(c) IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE STATE TO ENSURE THAT COMPENSATION TO AN INJURED PARTY IS NOT REDUCED
MERELY BECAUSE A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER Assigns or Sells SUCH A LIEN TO ANOTHER PERSON;

(d) It IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE STATE TO ENSURE THAT THE CHARGES UNDERLYING HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIENS ARE NOT EXCESSIVE, UNREASONABLE, OR INFLATED AND THAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIENS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO SURCHARGES, FINANCE CHARGES, INTEREST, OR OTHER INCREASES TO THE AMOUNT OF THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN; AND

(e) This ARTICLE 27.5 IS INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO PROMPTLY TREAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIMITED OR NO HEALTH INSURANCE AND WHO HAVE BEEN INJURED AS THE RESULT OF THE NEGLIGENCE OR WRONGFUL ACTS OF ANOTHER PERSON AND TO PROTECT INJURED PEOPLE FROM EXCESSIVE, UNREASONABLE, OR INFLATED MEDICAL SERVICE CHARGES AND SURCHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIENS.

38-27.5-102. Definitions. As used in this ARTICLE 27.5, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(1) "Healthcare Provider" means a person licensed or certified in the state to practice medicine, pharmacy, chiropractic, nursing, physical therapy, podiatry, dentistry, optometry, occupational therapy, or other healing arts. "Healthcare Provider" also means an ambulatory surgical center and any other licensed healthcare providers as permitted by the laws of the state.

(2) "Healthcare Provider lien" means a lien created by a healthcare provider or its assignee related to charges for medical services and care given to a person injured as a result
OF THE NEGLIGENCE OR WRONGFUL ACT OF ANOTHER PERSON, WHICH LIEN
IS ASSERTED AGAINST MONEY RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF A CLAIM OR
CLAIMS THAT THE INJURED PERSON ASSERTS AGAINST THIRD PARTIES OR
UNDER AN UNINSURED OR UNDERINSURED MOTORIST INSURANCE POLICY.

38-27.5-103. Healthcare provider lien - options for payments
- limitations. (1) (a) AT OR BEFORE THE TIME A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER
LIEN IS CREATED, A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE SHALL
ADVISE THE INJURED PARTY OF THE AVAILABLE METHODS FOR PAYMENT
OF THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S CHARGES FOR TREATMENT OF THE
INJURED PARTY. THESE OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

(I) THE CREATION OF A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN;

(II) THE USE OF BENEFITS AVAILABLE FROM ANY PAYER OF
BENEFITS, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 38-27-101 (9), TO WHICH THE INJURED
PERSON IS A BENEFICIARY;

(III) ANY OTHER PAYMENT METHOD OR ARRANGEMENT
AGREEABLE TO BOTH THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE AND
THE INJURED PERSON; OR

(IV) A COMBINATION OF THE PAYMENT METHODS SPECIFIED IN
SUBSECTIONS (1)(a)(I) TO (1)(a)(III) OF THIS SECTION.

(b) (I) IF A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE IS INFORMED
DURING THE COURSE OF TREATMENT BY THE INJURED PARTY OR THE
INJURED PARTY'S LEGAL COUNSEL THAT THE INJURED PARTY HAS
OBTAINED HEALTH INSURANCE, ALL FUTURE CARE MAY BE BILLED TO THE
HEALTH INSURANCE CARRIER AT THE INJURED PERSON'S DISCRETION.

(II) AT OR BEFORE THE TIME A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN IS
CREATED, A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE SHALL ADVISE THE
INJURED PERSON OF THE OPTION TO BILL FUTURE CHARGES TO A HEALTH
INSURANCE PROVIDER OBTAINED DURING THE COURSE OF TREATMENT IN
ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (1)(b)(I) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) THE AMOUNT OF A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN MUST NOT
EXCEED THE CHARGES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE INJURED PERSON
BILLED AT A RATE EQUAL TO THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S STANDARD FEE
SCHEDULE.

(3) (a) A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE SHALL NOT ADD
SURCHARGES, FINANCE CHARGES, OR INTEREST TO A HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER'S BILLED CHARGES OR OTHERWISE INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF A
HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S BILLED CHARGES AFTER THE MEDICAL SERVICE
HAS BEEN PROVIDED WHEN CREATING OR CLAIMING A HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER LIEN. THE INJURED PERSON IS ONLY OBLIGATED TO PAY THE
HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE THE AMOUNT OF THE
HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN.

(b) THIS SUBSECTION (3) DOES NOT APPLY TO A COLLECTION
AGENCY AS DEFINED IN SECTION 5-16-103 (3) OR A DEBT COLLECTOR AS
DEFINED IN SECTION 5-16-103 (9) WHO HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A
HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN FOR THE PURPOSES OF COLLECTING A DEBT.

(4) A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN, WHETHER HELD OR CLAIMED
BY A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE, IS NOT A CONSUMER LOAN
AS DEFINED IN SECTION 5-1-301 (15) OR A LOAN AS DEFINED IN SECTION
5-1-301 (25). A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE WHO CREATES,
HOLDS, OR CLAIMS A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN UNDER THIS ARTICLE
27.5 SHALL NOT BE DEEMED A CONSUMER LENDER SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF
CREATING, HOLDING, OR CLAIMING A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN.

(5) A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR ITS ASSIGNEE WHO CREATES,
HOLDS, OR CLAIMS A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER LIEN UNDER THIS ARTICLE
27.5 IS NOT A PAYER OF BENEFITS AS DEFINED IN SECTION 10-1-135 (2)(c).

38-27.5-104. Assignment - not admissible as evidence. (1) A healthcare provider claiming a healthcare provider lien under this article 27.5 may assign, in writing, a healthcare provider lien to any other person or entity. An assignee of a healthcare provider lien has all the rights and remedies of the assignor and is subject to the restrictions and obligations of the assignor under this article 27.5.

(2) The amount paid by an assignee of a healthcare provider lien for the assignment, the fact of the assignment, and the terms of the assignment are not subject to discovery or admissible as evidence in any third-party or first-party action for any purpose, including as evidence of the reasonable value of a healthcare provider's services.

(3) A healthcare provider lien which is subsequently assigned shall not be reduced pursuant to any post-verdict set-off or reduction as described in section 13-21-111.6.

38-27.5-105. Applicability. (1) This article 27.5 applies to healthcare provider liens created on or after the effective date of this article 27.5.

(2) This article 27.5 applies to a healthcare provider lien created before the effective date of this article 27.5 if the healthcare provider lien complies with section 38-27.5-103 (2) and (3)(a); except that section 38-27.5-103 (1)(a) and (1)(b)(II) does not apply to such a lien.

38-27.5-106. No impact on hospital liens. This article 27.5 does not change, modify, or amend the provisions of section
SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 2, 2019, if adjournment sine die is on May 3, 2019); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2020 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.