

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass
Vote:	9 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Boone, Cowan, Dembrow, Freeman, Huffman, Maurer, Olson, VanOrman, Tomei
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Keely West, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/8, 5/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Allows individuals with a serious mental illness to apply for medical assistance between 90 and 120 days prior to their release from a public institution and to receive assistance upon release if found to be eligible.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for codification of best practices
- Benefits of continuity of care

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment

BACKGROUND: Senate Bill 275 A allows for application to Medicaid between 90 and 120 days prior to an inmate's release from incarceration. The Department of Human Services (DHS) has determined that a 90 day time period does not give the department adequate time to process disability determinations for individuals, which must occur before Medicaid benefits can be authorized.

Medicaid applications for most individuals who have a disability are processed by the field offices of Seniors and People with Disabilities Division (SPD) of the Department of Human Services. For the past two years, in collaboration with the Department of Corrections (DOC), SPD has processed pre-release Medicaid applications for inmates with serious mental illnesses. To date, there have been 148 individuals with severe mental illness who were able to access Medicaid immediately upon release from prison because of the new process.

The current collaborative process between DOC and SPD allows any inmate who meets the severe mental illness criteria to apply for Medicaid 90 to 120 days prior to their release. SPD and DOC have determined that allowing any inmate with a severe mental illness to apply for Medicaid pre-release improves the chances of obtaining the medical cards they need to access mental health treatment and to continue their medication regime after release.