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Bill Analysis
Legislative Service Commission

H.B. 67*

126th General Assembly

(As Reported by H. Finance and Appropriations)

(Excluding appropriations, fund transfers, and similar provisions)

Rep. Schaffer

BILL SUMMARY

- Permits the Administrator of Workers' Compensation to adopt rules, identifying medical conditions that have a historical record of being allowed whenever included in a claim, and to grant immediate allowance and make immediate payment of medical bills for those medical conditions.
- Creates the Long-Term Care Loan Fund Program and the Long-Term Care Loan Fund using funds transferred from the Safety and Hygiene Fund.
- Requires the Administrator to use the funds in the Long-Term Care Loan Fund to make loans without interest to nursing home employers to pay for specified equipment and training for employers to implement a policy of no manual lifting of residents by employees.
- Permits the Administrator to adopt rules to administer the Long-Term Care Loan Fund Program.
- Transfers the operation and administration of the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program from the Department of Commerce to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC).

* *This analysis was prepared before the report of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee appeared in the House Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete.*

- Abolishes the Public Employment Risk Reduction Advisory Commission and transfers its duties to the Workers' Compensation Oversight Commission.
- Abolishes the Public Employment Risk Reduction Fund.
- Transfers the administration of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) On-Site Consultation Program from the Department of Commerce to the BWC.
- Transfers the OSHA Enforcement Fund from the Department of Commerce to the BWC.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Immediate allowance of specified medical conditions

The bill permits the Administrator of Workers' Compensation, with the advice and consent of the Workers' Compensation Oversight Commission, to adopt rules that identify specified medical conditions that have a historical record of being allowed whenever included in a claim. The Administrator may grant immediate allowance of and make immediate payment of medical bills for any medical condition identified in those rules upon the filing of a claim involving that medical condition. If an employer contests the allowance of a claim involving any medical condition identified in those rules, and the claim is disallowed, the bill specifies that payment for the medical condition included in that claim must be charged to and paid from the Surplus Fund. (Sec. 4123.511(A).) The immediate allowance of specified medical conditions permitted in the bill was previously authorized as a pilot program, which expires September 30, 2005, as do the current rules adopted for the immediate allowance of specified medical conditions (see Section 3 of Am. Sub. H.B. 183 of the 125th General Assembly).

Long-Term Care Loan Fund Program

The bill requires the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) to operate a Long-Term Care Loan Fund Program. The Administrator may adopt rules, employ personnel, and do all things necessary for that purpose (sec. 4121.48(A)). The bill also creates in the state treasury the Long-Term Care Loan Fund, which consists of money the Administrator, with the advice and consent of the Workers' Compensation Oversight Commission, requests the Director of Budget and Management to transfer from the Safety and Hygiene Fund. The bill expands the purposes for which money in the Safety and Hygiene Fund may be used to include this Program (sec. 4121.37). The Long-Term Care Loan Fund must be used solely

for purposes identified in the paragraph below. All investment earnings of the Fund are credited to the Fund. (Secs. 4121.37 and 4121.48(C).)

Under the bill, the Administrator must use the Program to make loans without interest to employers that are nursing homes¹ for the purpose of allowing those employers to purchase, improve, install, or erect sit-to-stand floor lifts, ceiling lifts, other lifts, and fast electric beds, and to pay for the education and training of personnel to implement a facility policy of no manual lifting of residents by employees. The bill permits the Administrator, with the advice and consent of the Oversight Commission, to adopt rules for loan eligibility, maximum loan amounts, loan periods, default penalties, and any other terms the Administrator considers necessary for a loan. (Sec. 4121.48(B).)

Transfer of the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program and the OSHA On-Site Consultation Program

Current law establishes the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program (PERRP; Chapter 4167. of the Revised Code), which is administrated and enforced by the Division of Labor and Worker Safety in the Department of Commerce, for public employers and public employees in the workplace. Under current law the Public Employment Risk Reduction Advisory Commission adopts employment risk reduction standards that all public employers must observe with respect to public employment. Public employers may apply for temporary or permanent variances from standards based on claims of hardship. The Director of Commerce must inspect public workplaces and seek injunctive relief for violations of the standards. The Director also must develop and maintain an effective program of collection, compilation, and analysis of employment risk reduction statistics as specified in current law.

The bill transfers the operation and administration of the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program from the Department of Commerce to the BWC. The duties assigned to the Director and the Department under current law are transferred to the Administrator and the BWC under the bill. (Secs. 121.08, 4121.12, 4121.121, 4167.02, 4167.06 to 4167.12, 4167.14 to 4167.17, 4167.19, and 4167.27.)

¹ "Nursing home" is defined as a home used for the reception and care of individuals who by reason of illness or physical or mental impairment require skilled nursing care and of individuals who require personal care services but not skilled nursing care. A nursing home is licensed to provide personal care services and skilled nursing care. (Sec. 4121.48(D) and R.C. 3721.01, not in the bill.)

Under current law, the Department of Commerce also administers the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) On-Site Consultation Program. The OSHA On-Site Consultation Program assists private employers in learning about potential workplace hazards, improving occupational safety and health management systems, and qualifying for an exemption from OSHA inspections.

The bill transfers the administration of the OSHA On-Site Consultation Program and the associated OSHA Enforcement Fund from the Department to the BWC (Sections 4 and 5).

The bill also abolishes the Public Employment Risk Reduction Advisory Commission and transfers its duties to the Workers' Compensation Oversight Commission. These duties involve giving advice and consent for adopting rules, including rules adopted to set safety standards, and establishing fees for variance applications. (Secs. 4121.12, 4167.02, 4167.07 to 4167.09, 4167.11, 4167.14, and 4167.27.) Additionally, the bill abolishes the Public Employment Risk Reduction Fund (sec. 4167.18, repealed by the bill).

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
Introduced	02-15-05	p. 210
Reported, H. Finance & Appropriations	---	---

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