

Reference No. CB-099-2023
Draft No.: 2
Committee Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee
Date: October 12, 2023
Action FAV (A)

REPORT

Committee Vote: Favorable as amended 4-0 (In favor: Council Members Burroughs, Oriadha, Harrison, and Ivey)

Absent: Council Member Fisher

The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee convened on October 12, 2023, to consider CB-99-2023. The legislation amends the County Code that mandates health insurance providers contracted by the County to include at least one Prince George's County hospital within their network for inpatient care in the health insurance plans offered to county employees. This would ensure that county employees have access to local inpatient care facilities.

The bill sponsor highlighted the necessity of providing county employees with insurance options, including access to hospitals in the county where they reside. This aims to offer more flexibility and convenience to employees in their healthcare choices.

The Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement indicates that additional expenditures may be required, and no revenue impact is likely. The indirect impact is favorable.

The Office of Law has reviewed the referenced bill as it was presented on October 3, 2023, and finds it to be in proper legislative form with no legal impediments to enactment.

The Administration representative expressed support for CB-99-2023 but indicated a shortage of providers and that the legislation may have unintended effects. A representative from OHRM stated concerns with the legislation, indicating that the County needs more local providers to support the bill's outcome. Second, as a result, there is concern that the legislation will have the unintended effect of reducing employee access to healthcare instead. It was requested that the issue of

bed space and access be viewed more globally across the county and not just exclusive to county employees.

The OHRM representative shared that Dr. Somni Arreola, DCAO for Health, Human Services and Education, is spearheading an ongoing work group with the national insurance providers, local healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to address the issue of bed space and expanding access.

A Council Member asked how this bill reduces access since this differs from the bill's intention.

The OHRM representative indicated that if they can't meet the mandates, they cannot participate in providing insurance to the County employees.

The OHRM representative stated that with the bidding process, their standard practice typically results in only a few responses, potentially conflicting with the new legislation.

A Council Member suggested that since we currently have a contract with the current healthcare providers, language can be added to this legislation that will apply when the current healthcare contract is up for bid in 2025.

The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee voted 4-0 on the proposed amendment to incorporate language into the bill to specify that the law, once enacted, applies prospectively and pertains to the subsequent procurement of new contracts.

The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee voted 4-0 favorably as amended on CB-99-2023.