

2023 -- H 6120

LC002471

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LICENSING OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Introduced By: Representative David P. Morales

Date Introduced: March 03, 2023

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 23-17 of the General Laws entitled "Licensing of Healthcare
2 Facilities" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **23-17-28.1. Medical debt relief.**

4 (a) As used in this section the following definitions have the following meaning:

5 (1) "Creditor" means:

6 (i) A health care provider to whom a medical debt is owed; or

7 (ii) A person that has purchased a medical debt once owed to a health care provider.

8 (2) "Health care provider" means the same as that term is defined in § 23-17.16-2.

9 (3) "Medical debt" means a Rhode Island resident's debt for goods or services provided by
10 a health care provider.

11 (4) "Medical debt relief entity" means a nonprofit entity that:

12 (i) Purchases medical debt from creditors; and

13 (ii) Forgives the medical debt.

14 (5) "Medical debt relief restricted account" means the account created in subsection (b) of
15 this section.

16 (b) Medical debt relief restricted account.

17 (1) There is created within the general fund a restricted account known as the "medical
18 debt relief restricted account."

19 (2) The medical debt relief restricted account consists of:

1 (i) Appropriations by the general assembly;
2 (ii) Contributions by government entities, individuals, or other persons; and
3 (iii) Interest earned on the account.
4 (3) Funds in the medical debt relief restricted account may only be used to fund medical
5 debt relief in accordance with this section.

6 (c) Using appropriations by the general assembly from the medical debt relief restricted
7 account, the department shall contract with one or more medical debt relief entities for the purchase
8 and forgiveness of medical debt.

9 (2) The department shall report the the department of health in September of each even-
10 numbered year on debts purchased and forgiven under this section without disclosing information
11 that could be used to identify individual debtors or creditors.

12 (3) The department may use funds appropriated from the medical debt relief restricted
13 account to pay for the costs of administering contracts under this section.

14 (d) Appropriation. The general assembly shall appropriate for the fiscal year beginning
15 July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024 the amount of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for
16 this program. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for fiscal year 2024.

17 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LICENSING OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

- 1 This act would require the department of health to contract with medical debt relief entities
- 2 for the purchase and forgiveness of medical debt.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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