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Inmate Medical Expenses SB 218 by Sen. Jones & HB 319 by Rep. Hooper

Issue: 901.35 Fla. Stat. states that a person who is injured during or at the time of arrest is responsible for the cost of that medical care, treatment, hospitalization, or transportation. Section 1 first states that if the individual has insurance the provider may seek reimbursement from the insurer, then the individual or any financial settlement. Section 2 of the statute indicates that after exhausting sources listed in Section 1, the provider can seek reimbursement for those medical services from the general fund of the county if the arrest was a result of a state law or county ordinance violation, or reimbursement from the city if the violation was from a municipal ordinance.

- Many times providers do not seek reimbursement from the individual or their insurer and bill the county or Sheriff's Office directly at full fee rates. Taxpayers end up responsible for paying full fee rates to providers for person who would otherwise receive indigent rates.
- This bill would reduce expenditures by counties, municipalities and Sheriff's Offices to 110% of the Medicare reimbursement rate for inmate medical care, treatment, hospitalization, and transportation when no contract exist between a county or detention facility and a third party provider.
- Last year, the Legislature passed similar language for the Department of Corrections and its estimated they would save more than \$10,800,000.
- Sheriffs spent an estimated \$280,115,000 on inmate medical cost for 108 county detention facilities and 60,500 inmates. If we applied the costs savings the state received, counties would save more than \$7,000,000.
- In 2009, U.S. Congress passed legislation that afforded the same rates for the U.S. Marshall Service who contracts with state prisons and county jails throughout the nation. Their estimated cost savings is \$369,000,000.

For example: Pinellas County was billed \$1.2 million for care of 67 inmates. Using Medicare rates, the amount could potentially have been \$100,000 using the proposed amendment's allowable rates.



Support HB 319 and SB 218