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HOUSE BILL NO. 581

House Amendments in [] — February 4, 1994

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 65.2-714 of the Code of Virginia, relating to workers' compensation; prohibited billing by health care providers.*

Patrons—Cohen; Senator: Miller, Y.B.

Referred to Committee on Labor and Commerce

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 65.2-714 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 65.2-714. Fees of attorneys and physicians and hospital charges.

A. Fees of attorneys and physicians and charges of hospitals for services, whether employed by employer, employee or insurance carrier under this title, shall be subject to the approval and award of the Commission. *The Commission shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all disputes concerning such fees or charges; appeals from any Commission determinations thereon shall be taken as provided in § 65.2-706.* No physician shall be entitled to collect fees from an employer or insurance carrier until he has made the reports required by the Commission in connection with the case.

B. If a contested claim is held to be compensable under this title and, after a hearing on the claim on its merits or after abandonment of a defense by the employer or insurance carrier, benefits for medical services are awarded and inure to the benefit of a third party insurance carrier or health care provider, the Commission shall award to the employee's attorney a reasonable fee and other reasonable pro rata costs as are appropriate from the sum which benefits the third party insurance carrier or health care provider.

C. Payment of any obligation pursuant to this section to any third party insurance carrier or health care provider shall discharge the obligation in full. The Commission shall not reduce the amount of medical bills owed to the Commonwealth or its agencies without the written consent of the Office of the Attorney General.

D. *No physician, hospital, or other health care provider as defined in § 8.01-581.1 shall balance bill an employee in connection with any medical treatment, services, appliances or supplies furnished to the employee in connection with an injury for which an award of compensation is made pursuant to § 65.2-704. For the purpose of this subsection, a health care provider "balance bills" whenever (i) an employer or the employer's insurance carrier declines to pay [~~more than a portion~~ all] of the health care provider's charge or fee and (ii) the health care provider seeks payment of the balance from the employee.*

ENGROSSED

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