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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1226**

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-4806 and 58.1-522 of the Code of Virginia, relating to collection of debts by hospitals affiliated with public institutions of higher education.*

Patrons—Tran, Hudson and Hurst

Referred to Committee on General Laws

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That §§ 2.2-4806 and 58.1-522 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 2.2-4806. Utilization of certain collection techniques.**

A. Each state agency and institution shall take all appropriate and cost-effective actions to aggressively collect its accounts receivable. Each agency and institution shall utilize, but not be limited to, the following collection techniques, according to the policies and procedures required by the Department of Accounts and the Division: (i) credit reporting bureaus, (ii) collection agencies, (iii) garnishments, liens and judgments, (iv) administrative offset, and (v) participation in the Treasury Offset Program of the United States under 31 U.S.C. § 3716.

B. Except as provided otherwise herein, for collection of accounts receivable of \$3,000 or more that are 60 days past due, each agency and institution shall forward those claims to the Division for collection. The Division shall review forwarded accounts, determine the appropriate collection efforts, if any, for each account, and take such actions on the accounts as the Division may so determine.

C. Except as provided otherwise herein, for collection of accounts receivable under \$3,000 that are 60 days past due, each agency and institution shall contract with a private collection agency for the collection of those debts. Prior to referring accounts receivable of less than \$3,000, agencies and institutions may refer such accounts to the Division. The Division may accept the account for collection or return it to the agency or institution for collection by a private collection agency.

D. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, where a debtor is paying a debt in periodic payments to an agency or institution, the agency or institution may elect to retain the claim in excess of 60 days provided that such periodic payments are promptly paid until the account is satisfied. In the event the debtor is delinquent (i) by 60 days in paying a periodic payment or (ii) for such other period of time approved by the Division, the account shall be handled in the manner provided by subsections B and C of this section.

E. A public institution of higher education shall provide a debtor who is currently enrolled in such institution the option to pay his debt in periodic payments over the course of the term or semester in which the account became past due or, at the discretion of such institution, over a longer period, provided that such periodic payments are promptly paid until the account is satisfied. In the event that the debtor is delinquent (i) by 60 days in paying a periodic payment or (ii) for such other period of time approved by the Division, the account shall be handled in the manner provided by subsections B and C.

F. *Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, neither the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority nor the University of Virginia Medical Center (the Hospitals) shall aggressively collect accounts receivable related to medical treatment at such Hospitals or related facilities unless the Hospital has undertaken all reasonable efforts to determine whether an individual with delinquent debt is eligible for Medicaid or other assistance under the Hospital's financial assistance policy. The Hospitals shall develop policies and procedures related to debt collection that adhere, at a minimum, to the policies and definitions set forth in § 501(r) of the Internal Revenue Code as it was in effect on January 1, 2020. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the Hospitals from adopting policies and procedures related to debt collection that provide greater patient and consumer protections than those set forth in § 501(r) of the Internal Revenue Code.*

G. Each state agency and institution shall report and pay required fees to the Division as required by subsection C of § 2.2-518.

**§ 58.1-522. Participation in setoff program not permitted in certain instances.**

A. If the claimant agency determines that the administrative cost, as defined in the rules promulgated by the Tax Commissioner, of utilizing this article will exceed the amount of the delinquent debt, then such claimant agency shall not participate in the setoff program below such levels determined economically infeasible.

B. *Neither the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority nor the University of Virginia Medical Center (the Hospitals) shall participate in the setoff program for debts related to*

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HB1226

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