

February 2, 2016

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in support of the Facility Fee Transparency bill that is now in the Senate Committee-SB 122. I am currently the President of Kansas City Internal Medicine, an independent group practice which comprises 23 physicians, a chiropractor, and a psychologist at 4 locations in the Kansas City area. We remain physician-owned and without affiliation with any hospital. We take great pride in the cost-effective quality care we provide to more than 30,000 Kansas City area patients. Our efficiency and cost effectiveness was acknowledged by CMS in the reporting we provided as part of a Medicare ACO last year.

We know that practices and outpatient services owned by large hospital corporations cost up to 2-3 times as much as identical visits and services provided by independent physicians. This is partly (or perhaps largely) due to the facility fees that hospitals are allowed to add to the charges. These fees are not divulged to consumers before or at the time of service and are often not covered by insurance plans, especially plans with high deductibles. Healthcare consumers should have the right to know fees and charges before services are rendered the same as expected in other industries. Consumers should not be blindsided by large bills after the fact, and should have the ability to cost compare since often these are paid directly out of the consumer's personal budget. At present, patients don't know about these extra fees and higher costs until after services are rendered and they get the bill.

This bill simply requires advance notification to the patient of the facility fee when they make an appointment with a hospital employed physician. It is similar to the law passed in Connecticut in 2014.

Sincerely,

Marie A Delcambre, MD, FACP