

## **“Get Covered” Hospital Screening Bill House File 4063 (Reyer)**



### **The problem:**

No one chooses to go into debt to obtain necessary medical care for themselves or their children, but the consequences can be financially devastating. People with unpaid medical bills often deplete their savings and resort to credit cards or other high interest means of paying off medical debt.

#### **Unpaid Medical Debt:**

- leads to poorer health by deterring people from seeking medical care
- negatively impacts credit scores, leading to long-term financial challenges
- forces people to forego other necessities, including food, rent, and heat

Some people with medical debt in collections would have qualified for assistance at the time they received medical care, but they didn't know they were eligible. Once the debt is on a credit card, sold to a collection agency, or affects their credit report, it is generally too late to apply for assistance.

### **Did you know?**

Many people struggle with medical debt:

- In 2018, nearly 750,000 Minnesotans had medical bills in collections, equal to 17% of adults.<sup>i</sup>
- In 2019, over two-thirds of medical claims referred to the state for collection were for patients with household income below \$40,000.<sup>ii</sup>

#### **Our Goal: To reduce unpaid medical debt and increase payments to medical providers by ensuring that patients are:**

- Informed whether they qualify for financial assistance to help cover medical bills
- Offered assistance completing a full application if they are eligible

### **House File 4063:**

This bill requires hospitals to screen all uninsured patients for eligibility for:

- Medical Assistance (M.A.)
- Emergency Medical Assistance (E.M.A.)
- MinnesotaCare
- Advanced Premium Tax Credits
- Free or discounted care (also known as “Charity Care”)

Hospitals may use the Hospital Presumed Eligibility determination process or other similar screening and must assist patients with a full application if they appear to be eligible for any of the above.

***For additional information, please contact Anna Odegaard at [aodegaard@mnlisap.org](mailto:aodegaard@mnlisap.org).***

<sup>i</sup> [Financial Capability Study: Data and Downloads \(usfinancialcapability.org\)](https://www.usfinancialcapability.org/) accessed March 14, 2022.

<sup>ii</sup> Minnesota Department of Revenue, Legislative Request, February 3, 2022.