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HOUSE BILL NO. 56  
INTRODUCED BY E. BUTTREY  
BY REQUEST OF THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AMBULANCE PROVIDER ASSESSMENT FEE; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING THE ASSESSMENT FEE; ALLOWING AUDITING OF AMBULANCE PROVIDER REPORTS AND PAYMENTS; ALLOWING FOR PENALTIES AND INTEREST; REQUIRING REVENUES GENERATED BY THE ASSESSMENT FEE TO BE USED FOR SUPPLEMENTING AMBULANCE PROVIDER MEDICAID PAYMENTS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; PROVIDING A STATUTORY APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 17-7-502, MCA; PROVIDING FOR CONTINGENT VOIDNESS; AND PROVIDING A CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Definitions.** As used in [sections 1 through 13], the following definitions apply:

- (1) (a) "Ambulance provider" means a person licensed pursuant to 50-6-306 to provide ground ambulance transport, including transport for a municipal fire or police department or other government entity.
- (b) The term does not include:
  - (i) an entity that exclusively provides air ambulance services; or
  - (ii) an entity operated by the United States, an Indian tribe, or any facility authorized under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.
- (2) "Assessment fee" means the ambulance provider assessment fee as provided in [section 2].
- (3) "Department" means the department of revenue provided for in 2-15-1301.
- (4) "Emergency ambulance services" means any service delivered by an ambulance provider other than air ambulance services.
- (5) (a) "Net operating revenue" means gross revenue collected by ambulance providers for the

1 delivery of emergency ambulance services, minus amounts deducted for bad debt, charity care, and payer  
2 discounts.

3 (b) The term does not include nonpatient service-related revenue.

4  
5 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Ambulance provider assessment fee.** (1) Each ambulance provider  
6 shall pay to the department a uniform assessment fee of 5.75% of net operating revenues.

7 (2) The department shall deposit the proceeds from collection of the assessment fee in the  
8 ambulance provider special revenue account provided for in [section 14].

9  
10 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Relation to other taxes and fees.** The assessment fee imposed under  
11 [section 2] is, in addition to any other taxes and fees, required to be paid by ambulance providers.

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13 **NEW SECTION. Section 4. Rulemaking authority.** The department may adopt rules necessary to  
14 administer [sections 1 through 13].

15  
16 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Reporting and collection of assessment fee.** (1) On or before March  
17 31 each year, an ambulance provider shall file with the department a report of its net operating revenue  
18 received during the previous calendar year. The report must be:

19 (a) in the form prescribed by the department; and

20 (b) accompanied by a payment in an amount equal to the assessment fee required to be paid  
21 under [section 2].

22 (2) Revenue received for all emergency ambulance services provided during the calendar year  
23 must be included in the calculation of the ambulance provider's net operating revenue regardless of the source  
24 of payment for the services rendered, including services covered under fee-for-service and managed care  
25 arrangements.

26 (3) In the case of a transfer of ownership, the successor in interest to the ambulance provider  
27 assumes the liability for the assessment fee.

28

1            **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Audit -- records.** (1) The department may audit the records and other  
2 documents of an ambulance provider to ensure that the proper assessment fee has been collected.

3            (2)        The department may require the ambulance provider to provide records and other  
4 documentation, including books, ledgers, and registers, necessary for the department to verify the proper  
5 amount of the assessment fee paid.

6            (3)        An ambulance provider shall maintain and make available for inspection by the department  
7 sufficient records and other documentation to demonstrate how the ambulance provider's net operating revenue  
8 was calculated. The ambulance provider shall maintain the records for at least 5 years from the date the report  
9 is due.

10  
11           **NEW SECTION. Section 7. Periods of limitation.** (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a  
12 deficiency may not be assessed or collected with respect to the year for which a report is filed unless the notice  
13 of additional fees proposed to be assessed is mailed within 5 years from the date the report was filed. For the  
14 purposes of this section, a report filed before the last day prescribed for filing is considered filed on the last day.  
15 If, before the expiration of the period prescribed for the assessment of the fees, the ambulance provider  
16 consents in writing to an assessment after the 5-year period, the fees may be assessed at any time prior to the  
17 expiration of the period agreed on.

18           (2)        A refund or credit may not be paid or allowed with respect to the year for which a report is filed  
19 after 5 years from the last day prescribed for filing the report or after 1 year from the date of the overpayment,  
20 whichever period expires later, unless before the expiration of the period, the ambulance provider files a claim  
21 or the department has determined the existence of the overpayment and has approved the refund or credit. If  
22 the ambulance provider has agreed in writing under the provisions of subsection (1) to extend the time within  
23 which the department may propose an additional assessment, the period for filing a claim for a refund or credit  
24 or for allowing a refund or credit if no claim is filed, is automatically extended.

25  
26           **NEW SECTION. Section 8. Penalty and interest for delinquent fee.** If an ambulance provider does  
27 not pay the required assessment fee on or before the due date of the report as provided in [section 5], penalty  
28 and interest, as provided in 15-1-216, must be added to the assessment fee.

1

2            **NEW SECTION. Section 9. Estimated assessment fee on failure to file.** For the purposes of  
3            ascertaining the correctness of any report, the department may:

4            (1)        examine or cause to have examined by a designated agent or representative any books,  
5            papers, records, or memoranda bearing on the information required to be included in the report;

6            (2)        require the attendance of any officer or employee of the ambulance provider making the report  
7            or the attendance of any other persons having relevant knowledge; and

8            (3)        take testimony and require the production of any other material for its information.

9

10           **NEW SECTION. Section 10. Deficiency assessment -- penalty and interest -- hearing.** (1) (a) If  
11           the department determines that the amount of the assessment fee due is greater than the amount disclosed by  
12           the report, it shall mail the ambulance provider a notice of the additional fees proposed to be assessed. Within  
13           30 days after the mailing of the notice, the ambulance provider may file with the department a written protest  
14           against the proposed additional fees stating the grounds on which the protest is based. The ambulance  
15           provider may request in its protest an oral hearing or an opportunity to present additional evidence relating to its  
16           fee liability.

17           (b)        If a protest is not filed, the amount of the additional fees proposed to be assessed becomes  
18           final on the expiration of the 30-day period.

19           (c)        If a protest is filed, the department shall reconsider the proposed assessment and, if the  
20           ambulance provider has requested, shall grant the provider an oral hearing. After consideration of the protest  
21           and the evidence presented at an oral hearing, the department's action on the protest is final when it mails  
22           notice of its action to the ambulance provider.

23           (2)        When a deficiency is determined and the fees become final, the department shall mail a notice  
24           and demand to the ambulance provider for payment. Penalty and interest may be added to any deficiency  
25           assessment as provided in 15-1-216.

26

27           **NEW SECTION. Section 11. Closing agreements.** (1) The director of the department or a person  
28           authorized in writing by the director may enter into an agreement with an ambulance provider relating to the

1 liability of the provider in respect to fees imposed by [sections 1 through 13].

2 (2) An agreement under this section is final and conclusive, and, except on a showing of fraud,  
3 malfeasance, or misrepresentation of a material fact:

4 (a) the case may not be reopened as to matters agreed on or the agreement modified by an  
5 officer, employee, or agent of this state; and

6 (b) in a suit, action, or proceeding under the agreement or a determination, assessment, collection,  
7 payment, abatement, refund, or credit made in accordance with the agreement, the agreement may not be  
8 annulled, modified, set aside, or disregarded.

9

10 NEW SECTION. Section 12. Credit for overpayment -- interest on overpayment. (1) If the  
11 department determines that the amount of fees, penalty, or interest due for any year is less than the amount  
12 paid, the amount of the overpayment must be credited against any fees, penalty, or interest then due from the  
13 ambulance provider and the balance must be refunded to the ambulance provider or its successor through  
14 reorganization, merger, or consolidation or to its shareholders on dissolution.

15 (2) Except as provided in subsection (3), interest is allowed on overpayments at the same rate as  
16 is charged on unpaid taxes, as provided in 15-1-216. Interest is due from the due date of the report or from the  
17 date of overpayment, whichever date is later, to the date the department approves refunding or crediting of the  
18 overpayment. Interest does not accrue during a period during which the processing of a claim for refund is  
19 delayed more than 30 days by reason of failure of the ambulance provider to furnish information requested by  
20 the department for the purpose of verifying the amount of the overpayment.

21 (3) Interest is not allowed:

22 (a) if the overpayment is refunded within 6 months from the date the report is due or from the date  
23 the return is filed, whichever is later; or

24 (b) if the amount of interest is less than \$1.

25 (4) A payment not made incident to a discharge of actual ambulance provider assessment fee  
26 liability or payment reasonably assumed to be imposed under [sections 1 through 13] is not considered an  
27 overpayment with respect to which interest is allowable.

28

1            **NEW SECTION. Section 13. Warrant for distraint.** If the assessment fee is not paid when due, the  
2 department may issue a warrant for distraint as provided in Title 15, chapter 1, part 7.

3  
4            **NEW SECTION. Section 14. Ambulance medicaid reimbursement special revenue account --**  
5 **statutory appropriation.** (1) There is an ambulance medicaid reimbursement account in the state special  
6 revenue account provided for in 17-2-102 to the credit of the department of public health and human services.

7            (2) The account consists of:

8            (a) money from the assessment fee provided for in [section 2];

9            (b) any penalties and interest on penalties collected pursuant to [sections 1 through 13];

10           (c) other money authorized by the legislature to be credited to the account; and

11           (d) income earned on the account.

12           (3) Money in the account must be used by the department of public health and human services to  
13 provide funding no later than June 30 of each year for increases in medicaid payments to emergency  
14 ambulance services up to the average commercial rate for the service and for the cost of collection of the fees  
15 and other administrative activities associated with the implementation of increases in the medicaid payments to  
16 ambulance providers.

17           (4) Money remaining in the account at the end of a fiscal year may not be expended or transferred  
18 for any other purpose.

19           (5) Money in the account is statutorily appropriated, as provided in 17-7-502, for the purposes  
20 provided for in this section.

21

22           **Section 15.** Section 17-7-502, MCA, is amended to read:

23           **"17-7-502. Statutory appropriations -- definition -- requisites for validity.** (1) A statutory  
24 appropriation is an appropriation made by permanent law that authorizes spending by a state agency without  
25 the need for a biennial legislative appropriation or budget amendment.

26           (2) Except as provided in subsection (4), to be effective, a statutory appropriation must comply with  
27 both of the following provisions:

28           (a) The law containing the statutory authority must be listed in subsection (3).

1 (b) The law or portion of the law making a statutory appropriation must specifically state that a  
2 statutory appropriation is made as provided in this section.

3 (3) The following laws are the only laws containing statutory appropriations: 2-17-105; 5-11-120; 5-  
4 11-407; 5-13-403; 5-13-404; 7-4-2502; 7-4-2924; 7-32-236; 10-1-108; 10-1-1202; 10-1-1303; 10-2-603; 10-2-  
5 807; 10-3-203; 10-3-310; 10-3-312; 10-3-314; 10-3-316; 10-3-802; 10-3-1304; 10-4-304; 10-4-310; 15-1-121;  
6 15-1-142; 15-1-143; 15-1-218; 15-1-2302; 15-31-165; 15-31-1004; 15-31-1005; 15-35-108; 15-36-332; 15-37-  
7 117; 15-39-110; 15-65-121; 15-70-128; 15-70-131; 15-70-132; 15-70-433; 16-11-119; 16-11-509; 17-3-106; 17-  
8 3-212; 17-3-222; 17-3-241; 17-6-101; 17-6-214; 17-7-133; 17-7-215; 18-11-112; 19-3-319; 19-3-320; 19-6-410;  
9 19-9-702; 19-13-604; 19-17-301; 19-18-512; 19-19-305; 19-19-506; 19-20-604; 19-20-607; 19-21-203; 20-3-  
10 369; 20-7-1709; 20-8-107; 20-9-250; 20-9-534; 20-9-622; [ 20-15-328]; 20-26-617; 20-26-1503; 22-1-327; 22-3-  
11 116; 22-3-117; [ 22-3-1004]; 23-4-105; 23-5-306; 23-5-409; 23-5-612; 23-7-301; 23-7-402; 30-10-1004; 37-43-  
12 204; 37-50-209; 37-54-113; 39-71-503; 41-5-2011; 42-2-105; 44-4-1101; 44-4-1506; 44-12-213; 44-13-102; 50-  
13 1-115; 53-1-109; section 14; 53-6-148; 53-9-113; 53-24-108; 53-24-206; 60-5-530; 60-11-115; 61-3-321; 61-3-  
14 415; 67-1-309; 69-3-870; 69-4-527; 75-1-1101; 75-5-1108; 75-6-214; 75-11-313; 75-26-308; 76-13-150; 76-13-  
15 151; 76-13-417; 76-17-103; 77-1-108; 77-2-362; 80-2-222; 80-4-416; 80-11-518; 80-11-1006; 81-1-112; 81-1-  
16 113; 81-2-203; 81-7-106; 81-7-123; 81-10-103; 82-11-161; 85-20-1504; 85-20-1505; [ 85-25-102]; 87-1-603;  
17 87-5-909; 90-1-115; 90-1-205; 90-1-504; 90-6-331; and 90-9-306.

18 (4) There is a statutory appropriation to pay the principal, interest, premiums, and any costs or fees  
19 associated with issuing, paying, securing, redeeming, or defeasing all bonds, notes, or other obligations, as due  
20 in the ordinary course or when earlier called for redemption or defeased, that have been authorized and issued  
21 pursuant to the laws of Montana. Agencies that have entered into agreements authorized by the laws of  
22 Montana to pay the state treasurer, for deposit in accordance with 17-2-101 through 17-2-107, as determined  
23 by the state treasurer, an amount sufficient to pay the principal and interest as due on the bonds or notes have  
24 statutory appropriation authority for the payments. (In subsection (3): pursuant to sec. 10, Ch. 360, L. 1999, the  
25 inclusion of 19-20-604 terminates contingently when the amortization period for the teachers' retirement  
26 system's unfunded liability is 10 years or less; pursuant to sec. 73, Ch. 44, L. 2007, the inclusion of 19-6-410  
27 terminates contingently upon the death of the last recipient eligible under 19-6-709(2) for the supplemental  
28 benefit provided by 19-6-709; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 383, L. 2015, the inclusion of 85-25-102 is effective on

1 occurrence of contingency; pursuant to sec. 6, Ch. 423, L. 2015, the inclusion of 22-3-116 and 22-3-117  
 2 terminates June 30, 2025; pursuant to sec. 4, Ch. 122, L. 2017, the inclusion of 10-3-1304 terminates  
 3 September 30, 2025; pursuant to sec. 1, Ch. 213, L. 2017, the inclusion of 90-6-331 terminates June 30, 2027;  
 4 pursuant to sec. 10, Ch. 374, L. 2017, the inclusion of 76-17-103 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to secs.  
 5 11, 12, and 14, Ch. 343, L. 2019, the inclusion of 15-35-108 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 1, Ch.  
 6 408, L. 2019, the inclusion of 17-7-215 terminates June 30, 2029; pursuant to secs. 1, 2, 3, Ch. 139, L. 2021,  
 7 the inclusion of 53-9-113 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 8, Ch. 200, L. 2021, the inclusion of 10-4-  
 8 310 terminates July 1, 2031; pursuant to secs. 3, 4, Ch. 404, L. 2021, the inclusion of 30-10-1004 terminates  
 9 June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 548, L. 2021, the inclusion of 50-1-115 terminates June 30, 2025;  
 10 pursuant to secs. 5 and 12, Ch. 563, L. 2021, the inclusion of 22-3-1004 is effective July 1, 2027; pursuant to  
 11 sec. 1, Ch. 20, L. 2023, sec. 2, Ch. 20, L. 2023, and sec. 3, Ch. 20, L. 2023, the inclusion of 81-1-112, 81-1-  
 12 113, and 81-7-106 terminates June 30, 2029; pursuant to sec. 9, Ch. 44, L. 2023, the inclusion of 15-1-142  
 13 terminates December 31, 2025; pursuant to sec. 10, Ch. 47, L. 2023, the inclusion of 15-1-2302 terminates  
 14 June 30, 2025; pursuant to sec. 2, Ch. 374, L. 2023, the inclusion of 10-3-802 terminates June 30, 2031;  
 15 pursuant to sec. 12, Ch. 558, L. 2023, the inclusion of 20-9-250 terminates December 31, 2029; pursuant to  
 16 sec. 4, Ch. 621, L. 2023, the inclusion of 22-1-327 terminates July 1, 2029; pursuant to sec. 24, Ch. 722, L.  
 17 2023, the inclusion of 17-7-133 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 10, Ch. 758, L. 2023, the inclusion  
 18 of 44-4-1506 terminates June 30, 2027; and pursuant to sec. 10, Ch. 764, L. 2023, the inclusion of 15-1-143  
 19 terminates December 31, 2025.)"

20  
 21 **NEW SECTION. Section 16. Direction to department of revenue.** The legislature directs the  
 22 department of revenue to delay collection of the assessment fee provided for in [section 2] until the department  
 23 of public health and human services notifies the department of revenue that the centers for medicare and  
 24 medicaid services has approved the payments provided for in [section 14].

25  
 26 **NEW SECTION. Section 17. Codification instruction.** (1) [Sections 1 through 13] are intended to  
 27 be codified as a new chapter in Title 15, and the provisions of Title 15 apply to [sections 1 through 13].

28 (2) [Section 14] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 53, chapter 6, part 1, and the



1 provisions of Title 53, chapter 6, part 1, apply to [section 14].

2

3 NEW SECTION. Section 18. Contingent effective date. [This act] is effective on approval by the  
4 United States department of health and human services of all waivers and approvals necessary to implement  
5 the assessment fee and supplemental payments as provided in [sections 1 through 15]. The department of  
6 public health and human services shall notify the code commissioner within 15 days of the occurrence of the  
7 contingency.

8

9 NEW SECTION. Section 19. Contingent voidness. (1) [Sections 1 through 15] are void on the date  
10 that federal law or policy is amended so that the assessment fee collected pursuant to [sections 1 through 15]  
11 may not be considered as the state's share in claiming federal financial participation under the medicaid  
12 program. The department of public health and human services shall submit certification of the change in federal  
13 law or policy to the code commissioner within 15 days of the occurrence of the contingency.

14 (2) If [sections 1 through 15] are rendered void under the provisions of this section, all fees  
15 received or collected by the department of revenue prior to the date on which the act becomes void must be  
16 deposited in accordance with [section 2], and a person or party may not receive a refund of any fees received  
17 or collected by the department prior to the date on which [sections 1 through 15] become void.

18 (3) If the United States department of health and human services fails to approve the ambulance  
19 provider supplemental payments, [sections 1 through 15] are void. The department of public health and human  
20 services shall notify the code commissioner within 15 days of the occurrence of the contingency.

21

- END -