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I N   S E N A T E

June 13, 2016

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Introduced by Sen. YOUNG -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to establish a task force to conduct a comprehensive study on the ability to utilize telehealth within the workers' compensation system; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature recognizes due to  
2     geographic restrictions, provider shortages, inclement weather,  
3     restricted patient mobility and the lack of authorized workers' compen-  
4     sation medical providers that have familiarity with the language spoken  
5     by injured workers, patients face challenges in accessing health care  
6     providers and health care services. It is critically important that  
7     injured workers are provided with the ability to receive quality medical  
8     care in an efficient and expeditious manner. Telehealth is a valuable  
9     tool in improving the continuity, coordination, and efficiency of care  
10    for rural and underserved populations.

11    To date, there has not been a comprehensive study conducted in New  
12    York state to examine the efficacy of telehealth for injured workers  
13    seeking workers' compensation benefits in rural and underserved areas.  
14    The legislature therefore supports the commissioning of such a study in  
15    order to assess the effectiveness in allowing health care services to be  
16    provided by telehealth.

17    S 2. A task force is hereby established to conduct a comprehensive  
18    study on the ability to utilize telehealth within the workers' compen-  
19    sation system. The scope of such study shall include:

20    a. the determination of the feasibility of implementation of tele-  
21    health for medical exams for workers' compensation claims that ensures  
22    injured workers protection and access to quality care;

23    b. the ability to diagnose through telehealth and remain within the  
24    treatment guidelines set by the workers' compensation board;

25    c. the cost impact on employers;

26    d. the ability to prevent fraud; and

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 e. any other related information that the chairman of the workers'  
2 compensation board may deem necessary or relevant in carrying out this  
3 study.

4 S 3. a. The task force shall consist of 7 members to be appointed as  
5 follows:

6 (1) 3 members appointed by the governor;  
7 (2) 2 members appointed by the temporary president of the senate; and  
8 (3) 2 members appointed by the speaker of the assembly.

9 b. The governor shall designate one of his or her appointees as the  
10 chair of the task force.

11 c. The members of the task force shall be composed of individuals with  
12 expertise in the workers' compensation system and/or the provision of  
13 health care services by telehealth.

14 d. The members of the task force shall receive no compensation for  
15 their services, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses  
16 incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant to this act.

17 S 4. The task force shall make a report to the legislature of its  
18 findings, conclusions and recommendations on or before January 1, 2017.

19 S 5. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire and be  
20 deemed repealed February 1, 2017.