**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 16‑3‑1360 SO AS TO PROHIBIT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FROM ENGAGING IN DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITIES RELATING TO MEDICAL TREATMENT RECEIVED IN CONNECTION WITH A CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION OF A VICTIM OF CRIME UNTIL AN AWARD IS MADE OR A CLAIM IS DENIED AND TO STAY THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR THE COLLECTION OF THIS DEBT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 13, Chapter 3, Title 16 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 16‑3‑1360. (A) When a person files a claim pursuant to the provisions of this article, a health care provider that has received written notice of a pending claim is prohibited from all debt collection activities relating to medical treatment received by a person in connection with this claim until an award is made on the claim or until the claim is determined to be noncompensable and is denied. The statute of limitations for collection of this debt is suspended during the period in which the applicable health care provider is required to refrain from debt collection activities as provided in this section.

(B) For the purposes of this section, ‘debt collection activities’ means repeatedly calling or writing to the claimant and threatening to turn the matter over to a debt collection agency or to an attorney for collection, enforcement, or filing of other process. The term does not include routine billing or inquiries about status of the claim.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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