



**THE SENATE
FOURTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 2005

PUBLIC LAW NO. 14-64

SENATE BILL NO. 14-82

AN ACT

To provide for the expenses of family member or friend escort of medical referral patients; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE FOURTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 Section 1. Findings and Purpose. Although a Commonwealth Medical Referral
2 Program has been successfully established for the medical needs of the patient, often the
3 patient is unable to cope, for various and obvious reasons, while on medical referral without
4 the effective assistance of an escort. Because of the impracticality of sending a medical
5 professional with the patient, except in very extreme cases, a family member or friend escort
6 is adequate in most cases.

7 However, the Legislature finds that families in the Commonwealth experience undue
8 financial hardship when a family member requires medical attention outside the
9 Commonwealth with the added cost of sending a family member or friend escort. The
10 purpose of this act is to alleviate the majority of the expenses associated with sending a
11 family member or friend escort along with the patient in most cases where such expenses
12 would be a grave financial burden on families.

13 Section 2. Medical Referral Patient Family Escort. Except as provided in this act,
14 each patient that is approved for a medical referral outside the Commonwealth in accordance
15 with any law or regulation establishing or providing for a Commonwealth Medical Referral

1 Program shall be entitled to be escorted by one family member or friend, at government
2 expense as provided in this act, in those cases where the patient is unable to travel
3 independently because of:

4 (a) physical disability, frailty or age;

5 (b) psychiatric disability or mental deficiency;

6 (c) blindness or deafness;

7 (d) fecal or urinary incontinence requiring the patient to seek assistance to use
8 the toilet;

9 (e) the patient's inability to feed himself or herself or to perform other
10 activities of daily living; or

11 (f) the strong possibility that the patient will die at the referral health care
12 facility as a result of the severity of the illness or condition.

13 Section 3. Expenses Covered. The expenses authorized at no cost to the family
14 member or friend escort shall be limited to the lowest cost for roundtrip airfare, reasonable
15 hotel or other accommodations, daily ground transportation at the established government
16 rate where no actual ground transportation is provided directly by the government, and a
17 daily subsistence allowance not to exceed thirty dollars (\$30).

18 Section 4. Escort Ineligibility. No patient approved for medical referral shall be
19 entitled to be escorted by a family member or friend as provided under Section 2 of this act
20 if:

21 (a) the patient, in the 12 months immediately preceding the date the patient is
22 approved for medical referral, personally has received or earned total income of more
23 than \$70,000; or

24 (b) the intended escort, in the 12 months immediately preceding the date the
25 patient he or she is approved for medical referral, personally has received or earned
26 total income of more than \$70,000.


27 Section 5. Severability. If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
28 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent

1 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
2 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

3 Section 6. Savings Clause. This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be
4 construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
5 repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers
6 contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law.
7 The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying,
8 any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence at the date this Act
9 becomes effective.

10 Section 7. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
11 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

CERTIFIED BY:




JOAQUIN G. ADRIANO
President of the Senate

ATTESTED BY:



JOSEPH M. MENDIOLA
Senate Legislative Secretary

Approved this 29th day of April, 2005



JUAN N. BABAUTA
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands