Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

Act 855 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas

As Engrossed: S3/9/11 S3/10/11

A Bill

Regular Session, 2011

SENATE BILL 66

By: Senator J. Jeffress

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE TREATMENT OF MORBID OBESITY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

AN ACT TO REQUIRE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE TREATMENT OF MORBID OBESITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Morbid obesity causes many medical problems and costly health complications, such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and stroke;

(2) The cost of managing the complications of morbid obesity, largely due to inadequate treatment, far outweighs the cost of expeditious, effective medical treatment;

(3) Guidelines developed by the National Institutes of Health, the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, the American Obesity Association, and Shape Up America and embraced by the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons recommend that patients who are morbidly obese receive responsible, affordable medical treatment for their obesity; and

(4) The diagnosis and treatment of morbid obesity should be a clinical decision made by a physician based on evidence-based guidelines.
SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Definitions.

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Body mass index" means body weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared; and

(2) (A) "Morbid obesity" means a weight that is at least two (2) times the ideal weight for frame, age, height, and gender of an individual as determined by an examining physician.

(B) Morbid obesity may be measured as a body mass index:

(i) Equal to or greater than thirty-five kilograms per meter squared (35 kg/m²) with comorbidity or coexisting medical conditions such as hypertension, cardiopulmonary conditions, sleep apnea, or diabetes; or

(ii) Greater than forty (40) kilograms per meter squared (40 kg/m²).

SECTION 3. DO NOT CODIFY. Pilot Program on coverage for morbid obesity diagnosis and treatment.

(a)(1) A state and public school employees health benefit plan that is offered, issued, or renewed on or after January 1, 2012, shall offer coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of morbid obesity.

(2) The coverage for morbid obesity offered under subdivision (a)(1) of this section includes without limitation coverage for bariatric surgery including:

(A) Gastric bypass surgery;

(B) Adjustable gastric banding surgery;

(C) Sleeve gastrectomy surgery, and

(D) Duodenal switch biliopancreatic diversion.

(b) A state and public school employees health benefit plan shall offer the benefits under this section to the same extent as for other medically necessary surgical procedures under the enrollee's or insured's contract or policy with the entity.

(c) The coverage for morbid obesity diagnosis and treatment offered under this subchapter does not diminish or limit benefits otherwise allowable under a state and public school employees health benefit plan.

SECTION 4. DO NOT CODIFY. RULES.
The State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Board shall adopt rules to implement this subchapter.

SECTION 5. DO NOT CODIFY. This act shall become null and void and cease to have any effect at midnight on December 31, 2017.

/s/J. Jeffress

APPROVED: 03/31/2011