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**AB-2648 Air ambulance services.** (2021-2022)

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**Assembly Bill No. 2648**

**CHAPTER 440**

An act to amend Section 76000.10 of the Government Code, relating to air ambulance services.

[ Approved by Governor September 19, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 19, 2022. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 2648, Wilson. Air ambulance services.

Existing law imposes a penalty of \$4 until December 1, 2022, upon every conviction for a violation of the Vehicle Code or a local ordinance adopted pursuant to the Vehicle Code, other than a parking offense. Existing law requires the court that imposed the fine to transfer the revenues collected to the Treasurer for deposit into the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund. Existing law requires the assessed penalty to continue to be collected, administered, and distributed until exhausted or until December 31, 2023, whichever occurs first. Under existing law, moneys remaining unexpended and unencumbered in the fund on December 31, 2023, are to be transferred to the General Fund. These provisions remain operative until July 1, 2024, and are repealed effective January 1, 2025.

This bill would change the date on which moneys remaining unexpended and unencumbered in the fund are to be transferred to the General Fund to June 30, 2024. The bill would make the above-described provisions inoperative on July 1, 2025, and would repeal them as of January 1, 2026.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** Section 76000.10 of the Government Code is amended to read:

**76000.10.** (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as the Emergency Medical Air Transportation Act.

(b) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Department" means the State Department of Health Care Services.
- (2) "Director" means the Director of Health Care Services.
- (3) "Provider" means a provider of emergency medical air transportation services.
- (4) "Rotary wing" means a type of aircraft, commonly referred to as a helicopter, that generates lift through the use of wings, known as rotor blades, that revolve around a mast.

(5) "Fixed wing" means a type of aircraft, commonly referred to as an airplane, that generates lift through the use of the forward motion of the aircraft and wings that do not revolve around a mast but are fixed in relation to the fuselage of the aircraft.

(6) "Air mileage rate" means the per-mileage reimbursement rate paid for services rendered by rotary-wing and fixed-wing providers.

(c) (1) For purposes of implementing this section, a penalty of four dollars (\$4) shall be imposed upon every conviction for a violation of the Vehicle Code or a local ordinance adopted pursuant to the Vehicle Code, except parking offenses subject to Article 3 (commencing with Section 40200) of Chapter 1 of Division 17 of the Vehicle Code.

(2) The penalty described in this subdivision is in addition to the state penalty assessed pursuant to Section 1464 of the Penal Code. The penalty shall not be included in the base fine used to calculate the state penalty assessment pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 1464 of the Penal Code, the state surcharge levied pursuant to Section 1465.7 of the Penal Code, and the state court construction penalty pursuant to Section 70372, and to calculate the other additional penalties levied pursuant to this chapter.

(d) The court that imposed the fine shall transfer, in accordance with Section 68101, moneys collected pursuant to this section to the Treasurer for deposit into the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund, which is hereby established in the State Treasury. Notwithstanding Section 16305.7, the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund shall include interest and dividends earned on money in the fund. Any law that references the Emergency Medical Air Transportation Act Fund, as previously established by this subdivision, shall be construed to reference the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund, effective January 1, 2018.

(e) (1) The Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund shall be administered by the State Department of Health Care Services. Moneys in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund shall be made available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the department for any of the following purposes:

(A) For children's health care coverage.

(B) For emergency medical air transportation provider payments, as follows:

(i) For payment of the administrative costs of the department in administering emergency medical air transportation provider payments.

(ii) Twenty percent of the appropriated money remaining after payment of administrative costs pursuant to clause (i) shall be used to offset the state portion of the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate for emergency medical air transportation services.

(iii) Eighty percent of the appropriated money remaining after payment of administrative costs pursuant to clause (i) shall be used to augment emergency medical air transportation reimbursement payments made through the Medi-Cal program, as set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) If money in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund is made available to the department for the purpose described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1), both of the following shall occur:

(A) The department shall seek to obtain federal matching funds by using the moneys in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund for the purpose of augmenting Medi-Cal reimbursement paid to emergency medical air transportation providers.

(B) The director shall augment emergency medical air transportation provider payments in accordance with a federally approved reimbursement methodology. The director may seek federal approvals or waivers as may be necessary to implement this section and to obtain federal financial participation to the maximum extent possible for the payments under this section.

(3) (A) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the department shall use moneys in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund and any federal matching funds to do any of the following:

(i) Fund children's health care coverage.

(ii) Increase the Medi-Cal reimbursement for emergency medical air transportation services in an amount not to exceed normal and customary charges charged by the providers.

(B) Notwithstanding any other law, and pursuant to this section, if money in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund is made available to the department for the purpose described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1), the department shall increase the Medi-Cal reimbursement for emergency medical air transportation services if both of the following conditions are met:

(i) Moneys in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund will cover the cost of increased payments pursuant to clause (iii) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1).

(ii) The state does not incur any General Fund expense to pay for the Medi-Cal emergency medical air transportation services increase.

(f) The assessment of penalties pursuant to this section shall terminate on December 31, 2022. Penalties assessed before December 31, 2022, shall continue to be collected, administered, and distributed pursuant to this section until exhausted or until December 31, 2023, whichever occurs first. On June 30, 2024, moneys remaining unexpended and unencumbered in the Emergency Medical Air Transportation and Children's Coverage Fund shall be transferred to the General Fund, to be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purposes of augmenting Medi-Cal reimbursement for emergency medical air transportation and related costs, generally, or funding children's health care coverage.

(g) Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2, the department may implement, interpret, or make specific this section and any applicable federal waivers and state plan amendments by means of all-county letters, plan letters, plan or provider bulletins, or similar instructions without taking regulatory action.

(h) This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2025, and, as of January 1, 2026, is repealed.