88R14344 KBB-D

By:  Talarico H.B. No. 4234

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing an account to create a program to pay off certain outstanding debts attributed to medical expenses; making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter G, Chapter 403, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 403.1101 to read as follows:

Sec. 403.1101.  MEDICAL DEBTS REPAYMENT ACCOUNT. (a) The comptroller shall establish an account to create a program to pay off for certain individuals who reside in this state outstanding debts attributed to medical expenses.

(b)  An individual is eligible to have outstanding medical debts paid off only if the individual is a resident of this state and has:

(1)  a household income of 400 percent of the federal poverty level or less; or

(2)  debts attributed to medical expenses in a total amount that exceeds five percent of the individual's annual income.

(c)  In implementing the program, the comptroller shall work directly with hospitals, debt collection agencies, and others to purchase an individual's medical debts at a reduced price.

(d)  The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to establish the account and to create the program to pay off outstanding debts attributed to medical expenses.

SECTION 2.  The amount of $100 million is appropriated from the general revenue fund to the comptroller of public accounts of the State of Texas for the state fiscal biennium beginning September 1, 2023, to provide the payments required by Section 1 of this Act and to pay costs incurred by the comptroller in facilitating the program established under that section.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.