# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §9-5-11c

**§9-5-11c. Right of the department to recover medical assistance.**

(a) Upon the death of a person who was fifty-five years of age or older at the time the person received welfare assistance consisting of nursing facility services, home and community-based services, and related hospital and prescription drug services, the department, in addition to any other available remedy, may file a claim or lien against the estate of the recipient for the total amount of medical assistance provided by Medicaid for nursing facility services, home and community-based services, and related hospital and prescription drug services provided for the benefit of the recipient. Claims so filed shall be classified as and included in the class of debts due the state.

(b) The department may recover pursuant to subsection (a) only after the death of the individual's surviving spouse, if any and only after such time as the individual has no surviving children under the age of twenty-one, or when the individual has no surviving children who meet the Social Security Act's definition of blindness or permanent and total disability.

(c) The state shall have the right to place a lien upon the property of individuals who are inpatients in a nursing facility, intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or other medical institution who, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, the state has deemed to be permanently institutionalized. This lien shall be in an amount equal to Medicaid expenditures for services provided by a nursing facility, intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or other medical institution, and shall be rendered against the proceeds of the sale of property except for a minimal amount reserved for the individual's personal needs. Any such lien dissolves upon that individual's discharge from the medical institution. The secretary has authority to compromise or otherwise reduce the amount of this lien in cases where enforcement would create a hardship.

(d) No lien may be imposed on such individual's home when the home is the lawful residence of: (1) The spouse of the individual; (2) the individual's child who is under the age of twenty-one; (3) the individual's child meets the Social Security Act's definition of blindness or permanent and total disability; or (4) the individual's sibling has an equity interest in the home and was residing in the home for a period of at least one year immediately before the date of the individual's admission to a medical institution.

(e) The filing of a claim, pursuant to this section, neither reduces or diminishes the general claims of the department, except that the department may not receive double recovery for the same expenditure. The death of the recipient neither extinguishes or diminishes any right of the department to recover. Nothing in this section affects or prevents a proceeding to enforce a lien pursuant to this section or a proceeding to set aside a fraudulent conveyance.

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(f) Any claim or lien imposed pursuant to this section is effective for the full amount of medical assistance provided by Medicaid for nursing facility services, home and community-based services, and related hospital and prescription drug services. The lien attaches and is perfected automatically as of the beginning date of medical assistance, the date when a recipient first receives treatment for which the department may be obligated to provide medical assistance. A claim may be waived by the department, if the department determines, pursuant to applicable federal law and rules and regulations, that the claim will cause substantial hardship to the surviving dependents of the deceased.

(g) Upon the effective date of this section, the Attorney General, on behalf of the State of West Virginia, shall commence an action in a court of competent jurisdiction to test the validity, constitutionality, and the ability of the Congress of the United States to mandate the implementation of this section. This subsection does not limit the right of others, including recipients, to intervene in any litigation, nor does it limit the discretion of the Attorney General or appropriate counsel to seek affected persons to act as parties to the litigation, either individually or as a class.

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