

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1341

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care

Title: An act relating to increasing community residential options for nursing facility eligible clients.

Brief Description: Developing a home and community-based waiver for persons in community residential settings.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Conway, Boldt, Ruderman and Van Luven; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/22/01, 2/27/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a new COPES waiver program allowing nursing home eligible individuals with income above \$1,590 per month to receive long-term care services in boarding homes and adult family homes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Campbell, Republican Co-Chair; Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Skinner, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Ballasiotes, Conway, Darneille, Edmonds, Edwards, Marine, McMorris, Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

The Community Options Program Entry System (COPES) is a federally matched long-term care waiver program. The COPES program provides long-term care services to individuals in adult family homes, boarding homes, nursing homes, or in their own home. Medicaid-funded long-term care in a persons own home or in a community residential facility (boarding home or adult family home) is currently only available for

people with income under \$1,590 per month. However, individuals with income in excess of \$1,590 per month, while not able to participate in COPEs for community based care, are eligible for COPEs Medicaid-funded nursing home care. This is the result of a special program called "medically needy" which is only applied in nursing home care. For individuals who want community based care but are over the \$1,590 per month income limit, their options are to pay privately for services if possible, to enter a nursing facility, or to go without services if they are unwilling to be placed in a nursing facility.

Individuals who have been admitted into a nursing home with incomes above \$1,590 are referred to as "medically needy" and the program under which they are served is referred to as the "medically needy" program. They are eligible under this program because their income is less than the cost of that care. Since the state pays an average of about \$3,600 per month for nursing home care, this means that single people with incomes below about \$43,000 per year (\$3,588 per month), and \$60,000 per year for couples, can qualify for publically funded nursing home care under this program. This same income standard is not applied to community care. "Medically needy" is provided under a waiver of federal rules that allows our state to limit the total number of persons served.

Summary of Bill:

A new waiver program is established that will allow nursing home eligible individuals with income above \$1,590 per month (COPEs standard) to receive long-term care services in boarding homes and adult family homes. The Department of Social and Health Services is given authority to set the level of participation in this program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill will make community residential options such as adult family homes and boarding homes more accessible to nursing home eligible persons. This allows the client to live in a setting that meets their needs but doesn't force them into a nursing home because their income exceeded the COPEs standard.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kathy Leitch, Department of Social and Health Services; Jerry Reilly, Washington Health Care Association; and Karen Tynes, Washington Association of Housing and Services for the Aging.