

Children & Family Services

HB 1259

Brief Description: *Providing services for persons twenty years of age who are or who have been in foster care.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Kagi, Schual-Berke, Kenney, Lambert and Edwards.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Medicaid coverage is extended to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday.*
- *Young people up to age 21 who have been in foster care are made eligible for the array of independent living services created by federal law.*

Hearing Date: *1/29/01*

Staff: *Deborah Frazier (786-7152).*

Background:

The federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106 -169) allows states to extend Medicaid coverage to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday. The Act also allows states to provide independent living services, including room and board, to young people up to age 21 who become age 18 while in foster care, or, are likely to remain in foster care until age 18". The Act provides \$140 million nationwide, which is double the amount previously allocated.

Independent living services are designed to assist young people as they transition to adulthood. Services currently may include: assistance with obtaining a high school

diploma; vocational training; daily living skills training; and counseling. Approximately 100 youth up to age 21 are provided independent living services each month by the Children's Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Summary of Bill:

Medicaid coverage is extended to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday. The bill also could be interpreted to extend Medicaid coverage to youth who have been in foster care at some point in their lives.

Young people up to age 21 who have been in foster care are made eligible for the array of independent living services created by the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 23, 2001.*