
Health Care Committee

HB 2430

Brief Description: Providing for greater access to health insurance for small employers and their employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, Cody, Schual-Berke, Voloria, Chase, Dickerson, Santos, Haigh and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The requirement that health carriers offer a basic health lookalike insurance plan is eliminated.
- The Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services are required to determine whether it is appropriate to use public funds to subsidize employer-sponsored health insurance.

Hearing Date: 1/24/02

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Currently, a health carrier that offers any health benefit plan to a small employer is required to offer and market a health benefit plan that is identical to the benefits offered a person covered by the Basic Health Plan. Premium rates for health benefit plans for small employers cannot exceed 375 percent of the lowest rate for any age group. Some low-income workers may be eligible for coverage under the Basic Health Plan or the Medicaid program. Public funds are not currently used to subsidize employer-sponsored health insurance for such workers.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that a health carrier must offer a health benefit plan for small employers identical to the Basic Health Plan is eliminated. Premium rates for health benefit plans for small employers cannot exceed 500 percent of the lowest rate for all age groups on January 1, 2003. The Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services are required to establish pilot projects with entities that receive funding through the federal

Health Resources and Services Administration Community Access Program to determine whether it is appropriate to use public funds to subsidize the premiums of employer-sponsored health insurance.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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