

5211-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Long, Spanel, Winsley, B. Sheldon, Swecker, Fraser, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Carlson, Eide, Rasmussen, Fairley, McCaslin, Franklin, Haugen, Oke, Costa, McAuliffe, Prentice, Jacobsen, Constantine and Regala)

Brief Description: Requiring comparable mental health benefits.

SB 5211-S - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 3/13/01)

Finds that, without adequate mental health insurance coverage for children, families are often unable to pay for needed treatment. As a result, many children do not receive the services they need. The costs of this are enormous, often including increased disability costs, deteriorating school performance, increased use of other health care services, treatment delays leading to more costly treatments, suicide, family breakdown and impoverishment, violence, and institutionalization, whether in hospitals, juvenile detention, jails, or prisons.

Finds that the current disparity between insurance coverage for mental health services and coverage for medical and surgical services threatens the financial stability of many families and places Washington state children at risk.

Declares an intent to address this disparity and require a minimum level of mental health coverage for children.