

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1201

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to extending medicaid coverage for foster care youth who reach age eighteen.

Brief Description: Extending medicaid coverage for foster care youth who reach age eighteen.

Sponsors: Representatives Roberts, Kagi, Haler, P. Sullivan, Walsh, Pettigrew, Darneille, Santos, McCoy, Ormsby, Wood, Dickerson, Clibborn, Schual-Berke, Simpson, Lantz, Hasegawa, Kenney, Pedersen and Seaquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/24/07, 2/5/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- The Department of Social and Health Services will continue health coverage for foster children from their 18th birthday through their 21st birthday.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) provides services to youth in foster care generally through age 18, unless the youth is in school or in treatment. In addition to foster care placement services, the Department may provide medical coverage through Medicaid or the Medical Assistance Program.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Medical coverage is generally available through age 18 for all children covered by Medicaid. A few young adults between ages 18 and 21 that remain in foster care maintain eligibility for medical assistance.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Eligibility for Medicaid or Medical Assistance is extended for youth that were in foster care on their 18th birthday, up to age 21, irrespective of continuing placement in foster care.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A definition of "foster care" is added that is consistent with the federal Medicaid definition. The Department is directed to use the same income eligibility standards and eligibility determinations for the 18 to 21 year olds that is used for children in foster care.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Original requested on January 19, 2007. Substitute bill requested on February 5, 2007.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Extending Medicaid coverage to people aging out of foster care will result in reduced use of emergency rooms. It will help young adults coming from foster homes to keep health coverage until they are able to get a job and find health coverage through an employer.

(Concerns) The bill as introduced did not cover all out of home placements authorized by the federal government.

(Neutral) Funding for this proposal is not included in the Governor's budget request.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Roberts, prime sponsor; Timothy Bell, Connected Youth and Alumni Leaders of Tacoma and Passion To Action; Delilah Bruskas, Connected Youth and Alumni Leaders of Tacoma; Ken Kirsch; Benita Gjurasic; Jim Theopolis, Mockingbird Society; Casey Trupin, Columbia Legal Services; and Sean Walsh, Young Men's Christian Association of Greater Seattle.

(Concerns) Loren Freeman, Freeman Association.

(Neutral) Manning Pellanda, Department of Social and Health Services and Health Recovery Services Administration.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.