

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6421

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to providing medical coverage for smoking cessation programs.

Brief Description: Providing medical coverage for smoking cessation programs.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore, Keiser, McDermott, Hatfield, Kohl-Welles and Pflug.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Provides coverage for smoking cessation counseling services, including prescription and nonprescription drugs, for clients enrolled in the medical assistance and medical care services programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Barlow, Campbell, Green, Moeller, Pedersen and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, DeBolt and Seaquist.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 45.3 million people smoke cigarettes in the United States. The CDC has labeled cigarette smoking the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for approximately one out of every five deaths annually, or approximately 438,000 people.

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.

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) provides coverage for smoking cessation counseling for pregnant women. The coverage applies during pregnancy and continues through two months after giving birth. The coverage includes providing information and assistance to help the client stop smoking and may include prescriptions for pharmaceutical products upon attaining prior authorization.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department must provide a smoking cessation benefit to adults enrolled in the medical assistance and medical care services programs. The benefit must cover smoking cessation counseling services and prescription and nonprescription medications to promote smoking cessation. The Department may implement rules regarding appropriate coverage limitations as necessary to encourage the use of effective, evidence-based services.

The Department must track expenditures for a cohort of clients who receive smoking cessation benefits and submit a cost-benefit analysis of providing the benefit by January 1, 2012.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes the exemption from prior authorization for smoking cessation medications. Coverage limitations for smoking cessation services must be established based on evidence-based services, rather than discouraging waste and addressing fraud. The Department of Social and Health Services must track expenditures for a cohort of clients receiving smoking cessation benefits and submit to the Legislature a cost-benefit analysis of providing the services by January 1, 2012.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Removing financial barriers to smoking cessation programs increases participation and quitting rates. Medicaid enrollees smoke at over twice the rate of the general population. Smokers cost over \$2,000 per year more in health care utilization than non-smokers. Smoking cessation services are very cost-effective. Smoking and tobacco use is concentrated in the lower socio-economic portion of the population and providing smoking cessation services to these people is the right thing to do. This could result in significant cost savings for Medicaid and public health. Washington should take the lead in smoking prevention among adults. Tobacco use is the nation's leading cause of death.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Tim McAfee, Free and Clear and the University of Washington; Paul Zemann, Public Health - Seattle-King County; Sandi Swarthout, Washington Health Foundation; Nick Federici, American Lung Association of Washington and the American Cancer Society; and Raymond Miller, Washington State Command Council - National Association for Black Veterans, Black Policy Foundation, Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, King County Substance Abuse Administrative Board, and King County Children and Family Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.