

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2841

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to the standard health questionnaire.

Brief Description: Concerning the standard health questionnaire.

Sponsors: Representatives Hinkle, Cody, Kristiansen, Morrell and Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/28/10, 1/29/10 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Exempts individuals from taking the standard health questionnaire if they are purchasing an individual health benefit plan because their former employer has gone out of business.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Driscoll, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell and Pedersen.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Currently, persons wishing to purchase an individual health benefit plan must complete a standard health questionnaire unless:

- they are moving from one geographic area to another where the current health plan is not offered;
- their established health care provider is no longer in the network of the individual health plan;

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- they have exhausted the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) continuation coverage and apply within 90 days;
- they lose group coverage from a group that was exempt from COBRA requirements but had at least 24 months of continuous coverage immediately prior to disenrollment;
- they had at least 24 months of continuous coverage in the Basic Health Plan immediately prior to application; or
- they are eligible to purchase or drop COBRA continuation coverage.

Individuals who do not qualify for COBRA coverage because their employer employs fewer than 20 employees do not have to complete the standard health questionnaire if they apply for an individual health care policy within 90 days of a federally-defined qualifying event.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Individuals who are applying for an individual health benefit plan because their employer has gone out of business do not have to take the standard health questionnaire if application is made within 90 days of the employer discontinuing group coverage, the person had at least 24 months of continuous group coverage immediately prior to discontinuation, and the person provides a copy of verifiable legal documentation of the former employers termination of business.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The person applying for an individual health plan must provide legal documentation verifying their employer has gone out of business.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) If a person's employer has gone out of business, the person should not have to take the standard health questionnaire when applying for an individual health plan.

(In support with concerns) Premera Blue Cross supports the bill with an amendment to specify what legal documentation must be provided to ensure the employer has gone out of business.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hinkle, prime sponsor; and Gary Owens.

(In support with concerns) Kathy Gano, Premera Blue Cross.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.