

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2117

As of March 16, 2009

Title: An act relating to the basic health plan.

Brief Description: Modifying the basic health plan.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Morrell, Kenney and Conway.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/09, 93-4.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: The Basic Health program is a state-sponsored program providing low-cost health care coverage through private health plans. The program is available for Washington State residents who have family incomes below 200 percent of federal poverty level; are not eligible for free or purchased Medicare; are not institutionalized at the time of enrollment; and are not attending school full-time in the United States on a student visa. Foster parents with family incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for the subsidized program as well. The program also includes a health coverage tax credit program, linked to the Federal Trade Act of 2002, for enrollees that may be eligible for certain trade adjustment assistance benefits.

Summary of Bill: A new category of the Basic Health enrollee called an "economic recovery enrollee" is established. To qualify, the enrollee must become involuntarily unemployed on or after September 1, 2008, be unemployed at the time of application, or be receiving unemployment compensation benefits. If an economic recovery enrollee becomes eligible for federal funds to provide health coverage, those funds may be used to subsidize the premiums of the enrollee.

Health insurance carriers that offer the subsidized Basic Health program must also offer the nonsubsidized program for economic recovery enrollees and health coverage tax credit enrollees. The claims experience of all enrollees must be pooled.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 16, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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