

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6487

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2010

Title: An act relating to repealing the expiration of the fair payment for chiropractic services requirement.

Brief Description: Repealing the expiration of the fair payment for chiropractic services requirement.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Pridemore, Keiser, Carrell, Pflug, Schoesler, Delvin and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/25/10, 1/28/10 [DP, w/oRec].
Passed Senate: 2/10/10, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Marr and Murray.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Becker and Parlette.

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: Legislation passed in 2008 requires health insurance carriers to pay chiropractors the same as other providers for the same physical medicine and rehabilitation code or evaluation and management code. The 2008 legislation included an evaluation of the impact on the utilization and cost of health care services for the impacted codes to be completed by January 2012, and an expiration date of June 30, 2013. The evaluation of the payment change was vetoed by the Governor.

Summary of Bill: The June 2013 expiration date is repealed, and insurance carriers will continue to pay chiropractors the same as other providers for the same codes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We dealt with the fairness of payment issue when we passed the bill and it is still a matter of fairness to continue the same payments. When we requested the bill in 2008, our data showed chiropractors were getting 20-30 percent less for the same codes, but we now have data that leads us to believe payment differentials were even larger. Some carriers have not really adjusted their codes to pay chiropractors more for services, and it is too bad the study of the impacts was vetoed so we would have an opportunity to have data gathered.

CON: When the bill was passed in 2008, the sunset was included to allow several years of experience and an opportunity to examine the impact once we had real life data and experience. Now we have just one year of experience and it is premature to delete the expiration date until we have been able to gather more experience. There has been an increase in costs as a result of the 2008 legislation. Carriers are paying more for chiropractic services and seeing a dramatic increase in utilization of the evaluation and management codes.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; Lori Bielinski, Washington State Chiropractors Association.

CON: Sydney Smith Zvarra, Association of Washington Healthcare Plans; Mel Sorensen, Americas Health Insurance Plans; Suzanne Swadener, Group Health.