

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1613

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Title: An act relating to providing eyeglasses for medicaid enrollees.

Brief Description: Regarding providing eyeglasses to medicaid enrollees.

Sponsors: Representatives Warnick and Reykdal.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness: 2/11/11, 2/16/11 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes licensed health professionals to purchase eyeglasses for enrollees of the state medical program from the Department of Corrections' class II Correctional Industries program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hurst, Chair; Ladenburg, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Klippert, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Goodman, Hope, Kirby, Moscoso and Ross.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides inmate work programs through the Correctional Industries Board (Board). The Board develops and implements programs that offer inmates employment, work experience, and training, and that reduce the cost of housing inmates. To achieve these goals, the Board operates five classes of correctional industry work programs. All inmates working in class I-IV employment receive financial compensation for their work. Class V jobs are court ordered community work that is performed for the benefit of the community without financial compensation.

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.

Class II Industries. Class II ("tax reduction") industries are state-owned and operated industries designed to reduce the costs for goods and services for public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Industries in this class must be closely patterned after private sector industries but with the objective of reducing public support costs rather than making a profit. The products and services of this industry, including purchased products and services necessary for a complete product line, may only be sold to: (1) public agencies; (2) nonprofit organizations; (3) private contractors when the goods purchased will ultimately be used by a public agency or a nonprofit organization; (4) an employee and immediate family members of an employee of the DOC; and (5) a person under the supervision of the DOC. However, to avoid waste or spoilage, by-products and surpluses of timber, agricultural, and animal husbandry enterprises may be sold at private sale or donated to nonprofit organizations when there is no public sector market for such goods.

Inmates working in tax reduction industries do so at their own choice and are paid a gratuity which cannot exceed the wage paid for work of a similar nature in the locality in which the industry is located. Class II gratuities range from 55 cents to \$1.55 per hour and includes such jobs as: producing aluminum signs, license plates and tabs, mattresses, asbestos abatement, meat processing, "optical lab," engraving, furniture manufacturing, screen printing and embroidery, industrial sewing, and laundry. Security and custody services are provided without charge by the DOC.

Summary of Bill:

Licensed health professionals are authorized to purchase eyeglasses from the DOCs' class II Correctional Industries program, for the sole purpose of providing the products to enrollees of the state medical program, at no more than the health professional's cost of acquisition.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Medicaid eliminated optical hardware for Medicaid recipients in January 2011. Many Medicaid recipients are having trouble getting glasses right now because there is a lack of funds to pay for them. This bill would basically reinstate that eligibility provision so that Medicaid recipients would be able to get their glasses from Correctional Industries.

(Information only) The bill would not only maintain 70 offender positions and four staff positions in the optical lab, but it would also ensure that Medicaid recipients are getting their glasses.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Sherrie Tessier, People First of Thurston County.

(Information only) Danielle Wiles, Department of Corrections.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.