
SENATE BILL 6228

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senators Mullet, Tom, Keiser, Frockt, Parlette, Hatfield, Cleveland, Fain, Becker, Ericksen, Rolfes, and Pedersen

Read first time 01/17/14. Referred to Committee on Health Care .

1 AN ACT Relating to transparency tools for consumer information on
2 health care cost and quality; adding a new section to chapter 48.43
3 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Consumers face a challenge finding reliable,
6 consumer friendly information on health care pricing and quality.
7 Greater transparency of health care prices and quality leads to
8 engaged, activated consumers. Research indicates that engaged and
9 educated consumers help control costs and improve quality with lower
10 costs per patient, lower hospital readmission rates, and the use of
11 higher quality providers.

12 Washington is a leader in efforts to develop and publish provider
13 quality information. A newly released national report on improving
14 health care quality and value named Washington as one of only two
15 states to receive an A grade on the transparency of physician quality
16 reporting. Conversely, information on health care costs are evolving
17 slowly and a recent report card on price transparency issued jointly by
18 two national groups awarded Washington an F grade for price
19 transparency.

1 Although data is available today, research indicates the existing
2 information is not user friendly, consumers do not know which measures
3 are most relevant, and quality ratings are inconsistent or
4 nonstandardized. It is the intent of the legislature to ensure
5 consumer tools are available to educate and engage patients in managing
6 their care and understanding the costs and quality.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 48.43 RCW
8 to read as follows:

9 (1) All health plans offered or renewed on or after January 1,
10 2016, must include consumer transparency tools with price and quality
11 information. The transparency tools must aim for best practices and,
12 at a minimum:

13 (a) Must combine quality and cost data;

14 (b) Must include a patient review option or method for members to
15 provide a rating or feedback on their experience with the medical
16 provider that allows other members to see the patient review;

17 (c) Must have mobile applications to allow people to access the
18 data on a mobile device while sitting in the doctor's office;

19 (d) Must display side-by-side comparisons that let consumers know
20 their best options;

21 (e) Must display the cost for the member of estimated out-of-pocket
22 charges to the member with the application of personalized benefits
23 such as deductibles and cost-sharing, along with the overall cost that
24 the employer or plan will be paying;

25 (f) Should provide quality information with a value rating of the
26 medical provider that is a blend of cost, quality, and user experience
27 measures; and

28 (g) Must display alternatives that are more cost-effective when
29 there are alternatives available, such as the use of an ambulatory
30 surgical center when one is available.

31 (2) In addition to required features on cost and quality
32 information, the transparency consumer tools must include information
33 to allow a provider search, with indicators for in-network designation,
34 of specialists, distance from patient, whether the provider is
35 accepting new patients, the provider's education, board certification
36 and other credentials, affiliated hospitals and other providers in a

1 clinic, maps and driving directions, and other information to assist in
2 choosing a provider.

3 (3) The commissioner must review the transparency tools to ensure
4 the required features are available, visible on the front page of the
5 health plan web page, and easy to use and understand. The commissioner
6 may request information be submitted with the rate filing or through a
7 separate process. The commissioner may write rules to detail the
8 procedures and timelines for the review.

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