
Health Care & Wellness Committee

SSB 5165

Brief Description: Authorizing palliative care in conjunction with treatment or management of serious or life-threatening illness.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Senators Angel and Frockt).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires carriers to offer optional coverage for home health care and hospice care to non-homebound patients who are seeking the services for palliative care in conjunction with treatment or management of serious or life-threatening illness.

Hearing Date: 3/13/15

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Group disability insurers offering group, blanket, or extended health coverage and health care services contractors must offer optional coverage for home health care and hospice care for persons who are homebound and would otherwise require hospitalization. The coverage only has to be offered in conjunction with a hospitalization benefit offered by the carrier.

The coverage:

- may be subject to reasonable deductibles, coinsurance, internal maximums, and utilization review;
- should be structured to incentivize the use of home health care and hospice care as an alternative to hospitalization;
- may require written treatment plans;
- must cover only services rendered by home health and hospice agencies licensed by the Department of Social and Health Services;

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- must provide at least six months of hospice coverage, which may be extended for an additional six months if the patient is facing imminent death or is entering remission;
- must provide coverage for at least 130 home health care visits per year; and
- may be structured to prevent the duplication of services or supplies in the primary contract.

Summary of Bill:

A person who is not homebound is eligible for optional home health care and hospice coverage if he or she is seeking the services for palliative care in conjunction with treatment or management of serious or life-threatening illness.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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