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**SENATE BILL 5179**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Bailey, Keiser, Palumbo, Hasegawa, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to requiring coverage for hearing instruments under public employee and medicaid programs; adding a new section to chapter 41.05 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 74.09 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 41.05 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A health plan offered to employees and their covered dependents under this chapter issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2018, must include coverage for hearing instruments when medically necessary. Coverage must include a new hearing instrument every five years, a new hearing instrument when alterations to the existing hearing instrument cannot meet the needs of the patient, and services and supplies such as the initial assessment, fitting, adjustment, and auditory training.

(2) The hearing instrument must be prescribed by a licensed audiologist and dispensed by a licensed audiologist or hearing aid specialist.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "hearing instrument" and "hearing aid specialist" have the same meaning as defined in RCW 18.35.010.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 74.09 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The medical assistance coverage offered under this chapter issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2018, must include coverage for hearing instruments when medically necessary. Coverage must include a new hearing instrument every five years, a new hearing instrument when alterations to the existing hearing instrument cannot meet the needs of the patient, and services and supplies such as the initial assessment, fitting, adjustment, and auditory training.

(2) The hearing instrument must be prescribed by a licensed audiologist and dispensed by a licensed audiologist or hearing aid specialist.

(3) For purposes of this section, "hearing instrument" and "hearing aid specialist" have the same meaning as defined in RCW 18.35.010.

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