

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5355

As of February 9, 2017

Title: An act relating to expanding the use of telemedicine to improve access to care for injured workers.

Brief Description: Expanding the use of telemedicine to improve access to care for injured workers.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Rivers, Cleveland, Keiser, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Saldaña and Darneille.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/09/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to develop access to telemedicine and reimburse providers.
- Adds the Director of L&I to the Washington State Telehealth Collaborative.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: Legislation passed in 2015 established requirements for health insurance payments for services delivered through telemedicine and store and forward technology. The act established originating sites for a telemedicine service including a hospital, rural health clinic, federally qualified health center, health care providers office, community mental health center, skilled nursing facility, or renal dialysis center.

Legislation passed in 2016 added the patient's home, and created the Washington State Telehealth Collaborative (Collaborative) to develop recommendations on improving reimbursement and access to services. The Collaborative is convened by the University of Washington Telehealth Services and participants include four legislators, and representatives of the academic community, hospitals, clinics, health care providers, health insurance carriers, and other interested parties.

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.

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) is responsible for paying for health care services for injured workers.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Director of L&I (Director) must develop access to telemedicine, and reimburse providers for services in a manner that is similar to the policies developed for commercial health insurance plans and Medicaid-managed care plans.

The Director, or the Director's designee, shall join the Washington State Telehealth Collaborative that was established in 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill was re-referred from the Commerce Committee since it really belongs in the Health Care Committee. The workers compensation program is a major health care delivery program for injured workers and telemedicine can expand access to under served regions and improve access to care.

OTHER: L&I is the insurer for injured workers and we pay for medical costs, time loss, and travel costs to get patients where they need to be. The earlier we intervene with care, the lower the costs are. We use and support telemedicine and support opportunities to expand telemedicine and improve access to specialty care in particular. The UW supports the substitute language with respect to the reference to store and forward technology. We would like that definition to stay consistent with the current law.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Steve Conway, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Ian Goodhew, UW Medicine; Tammy Fellin, Labor & Industries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.