

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6225

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As of January 23, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to health coverage for young adults.

**Brief Description:** Providing health coverage for young adults.

**Sponsors:** Senators Keiser, Conway, Saldaña, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Hunt and Lias.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long Term Care: 1/22/18.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Health Care Authority (Authority) to provide health coverage to certain individuals who are not eligible for categorically needy assistance.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

**Staff:** Evan Klein (786-7483)

**Background:** State Medical Assistance Program. The Authority administers the Medicaid program, also known as Apple Health, which is a state-federal program that provides health care for low-income state residents who meet certain eligibility criteria. Apple Health for Kids provides eligible children with health care that includes regularly scheduled health screenings to evaluate a child's growth, development, and general physical and mental health.

Eligibility. Eligible adults include those age 19 through 64 whose annual income is at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level, who are not incarcerated, and who are not entitled to Medicare. Adults must also be a United States citizen or a qualified alien who meets or is exempt from the five-year bar, to be eligible for Apple Health.

Qualified aliens are persons who are lawfully present in the United States and meet certain other residency requirements. There is a five-year bar from becoming eligible for Medicaid as a qualified alien. To pass the five-year bar, a qualified alien must have either:

- continuously resided in the United States for five years or more from the date they became a qualified alien;

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- entered the United States before August 22, 1996; or
- became a qualified alien after August 22, 1996 and has continuously resided in the United States between the date of entry and the date they became a qualified alien.

A qualified alien may also be exempted from the five-year bar if the person is a lawfully permanent resident, parolee, or abused person, who is also an armed services member or veteran, or family member of an armed services member or veteran.

**Summary of Bill:** The Authority is directed to provide health coverage to individuals who are between 19 and 26 years old, have an income at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level, are not incarcerated, and are not eligible for categorically needy medical assistance. The amount, scope and duration of health care services must be the same as that provided to individuals who are eligible for categorically needy assistance.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 12, 2018.

**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: Our current health care situation in the United States is becoming unstable and volatile. There is concern for young people who are undocumented citizens, because they cannot access Medicaid coverage and are left out of the protections of health insurance. This bill would make sure that we cover all kids, one way or the other. This bill builds on Washington's strong commitment to providing health coverage to young people, in line with the Cover All Kids program. This bill would remedy a gap in health coverage. The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion have significantly improved options for most residents. However, many immigrants and DACA recipients who used to be eligible for services under basic health are no longer eligible for services once they reach the age of 19. This is a limited step towards restoring coverage that the state provided when it offered basic health.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Karen Keiser, Prime Sponsor; Emily Murphy, Children's Alliance; Janet Varon, Northwest Health Law Advocates.

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