

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6448

As of January 22, 2018

Title: An act relating to expanding the list of authorized provider types to treat injured workers suffering from mental health conditions caused by their industrial injury or occupational disease.

Brief Description: Expanding the list of authorized provider types to treat injured workers suffering from mental health conditions caused by their industrial injury or occupational disease.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Conway, Rolfes, King, Warnick, Kuderer and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/22/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that mental health services available to an injured worker include mental health therapy and evaluation.
- Requires the mental health services to be provided by licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric advanced registered nurse practitioners, and licensed mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers.
- Authorizes mental health professionals to provide treatment and opinions.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Susan Jones (786-7404)

Background: In 2011, the Legislature found that high quality medical treatment and adherence to occupational health best practices can prevent disability and reduce loss of family income for workers, and lower labor and insurance costs for employers; and that injured workers deserve high quality medical care in accordance with current health care best practices.

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.

With the assistance of an advisory group, the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) was required to and has established minimum standards for providers who treat workers from both state fund and self-insured employers; and a health care provider network to treat injured workers. The network was established in 2013.

L&I must accept providers into the network who meet those minimum standards. Network providers are required to follow L&I's evidence-based coverage decisions and treatment guidelines, policies, and must be expected to follow other national treatment guidelines appropriate for their patient.

Upon the occurrence of any injury to a worker, the worker must generally receive proper and necessary medical and surgical services at the hands of a physician or licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner of the worker's own choice, if conveniently located, and proper and necessary hospital care and services during the period of the worker's disability from such injury. An injured worker may receive care from a non-network provider only for an initial office or emergency room visit. However, L&I or a self-insurer may limit reimbursement to L&I's standard fee for the services.

L&I, in collaboration with the advisory group, was required to adopt policies for the development, credentialing, accreditation, and continued oversight of a network of health care providers approved to treat injured workers. Health care providers must apply to the network by completing the L&I's provider application which has the force of a contract with L&I to treat injured workers.

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

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Generally, mental health services available to an injured worker include mental health therapy and evaluation. Mental health services for injured workers are limited to those provided by licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric advanced registered nurse practitioners, and licensed mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers. These mental health professionals are authorized to provide treatment and opinions, within the scope of their practice, on all benefits as provided under the industrial insurance laws.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2018.

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

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