
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5540

State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session

By Senate Health Care (originally sponsored by Senators Walsh, Darneille, Rivers, Braun, and Keiser)

READ FIRST TIME 02/17/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to an oral health pilot program for adults with
2 diabetes and pregnant women; adding a new section to chapter 74.09
3 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Washington state currently provides dental
6 coverage for enrollees in medicaid apple health coverage. Dental
7 services have been successfully provided for children in part due to:
8 Higher reimbursement rates for services provided to children and
9 through a public-private partnership with the access to baby and
10 child dentistry program that recruits and trains dentists to provide
11 preventive care to medicaid children, reduced barriers for low-income
12 families in accessing care with outreach, and enhanced reimbursement
13 for services provided to children from birth through age five.

14 Adults in medicaid apple health have more difficulty accessing
15 dental care. As a statewide average, only twenty-two percent of apple
16 health adults utilized care in fiscal year 2015. Utilization rates
17 vary across the state, ranging from 7.6 percent to 31.4 percent.

18 A growing body of research indicates oral health is connected to
19 systemic health. Pregnant women are more susceptible to oral health
20 problems due to changes in their bodies related to pregnancy. Dental
21 disease may cause complications during pregnancy, such as

1 preeclampsia and gestational diabetes. Adults with diabetes are also
2 at high risk for oral health problems. The chronic inflammation and
3 infection associated with gum disease can result in serious health
4 complications, including heart disease, kidney disease, blindness,
5 and amputation.

6 Studies have found significant medical savings when patients with
7 chronic conditions like diabetes and pregnant women received
8 treatment for gum disease. The legislature therefore finds that the
9 state should invest in a pilot program to test enhanced dental
10 benefits for medicaid apple health adults with diabetes and pregnant
11 women.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.09
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
15 specific purpose, the health care authority must begin a three-year
16 pilot program, named oral health connections, with the Washington
17 dental service foundation, modeled after the access to baby and child
18 dentistry program, to test enhanced dental benefits for medicaid
19 apple health adults with diabetes and pregnant women. The pilot
20 program's aim is to better integrate medical and oral health care to
21 improve health outcomes and control chronic disease. The pilot
22 program must include enhanced reimbursement rates for participating
23 dental providers and an increase in the allowable number of
24 periodontal treatments to up to four per calendar year. The
25 Washington dental service foundation shall partner with the agency
26 and provide wraparound services to link patients to care. Services
27 include, but are not limited to, outreach to and support for medical
28 providers, dental providers, care coordinators, accountable
29 communities of health, managed care organizations, and eligible
30 medicaid enrollees, in order to connect people with diabetes and
31 pregnant women with the oral health care they need.

32 (2) The health care authority and Washington dental service
33 foundation shall jointly determine the counties or regions to
34 participate in the pilot program, subject to the availability of
35 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose. The authority and
36 foundation shall provide joint progress reports to the appropriate
37 committees of the legislature each December 1st commencing after
38 implementation of the first year of the pilot program.

1 (3) This section expires June 30, 2022.

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