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**SENATE BILL 5540**

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

**By** Senators Walsh, Darneille, Rivers, Braun, and Keiser

Read first time 01/27/17. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

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 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. The Washington dental foundation shall partner with  
24 the agency and provide wraparound services to ensure the pilot  
25 program's success. Services include, but are not limited to, outreach  
26 to and support for medical providers, dental providers, care  
27 coordinators, accountable communities of health, managed care  
28 organizations, and eligible medicaid enrollees, in order to connect  
29 people with diabetes and pregnant women with the oral health care  
30 they need.

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

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

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