
Health Care & Wellness Committee

ESJM 8006

Brief Description: Requesting that the federal government create a universal health care program.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Cleveland, Billig, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nguyen, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez and Wilson, C..

Brief Summary of Engrossed Joint Memorial

- Requests the federal government to create a universal health care program, partner with the state to implement a single-payer health care system, or remove federal restrictions on the state's ability to create a universal health care system.

Hearing Date: 2/14/24

Staff: Carter Gale (786-7290) and Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Universal Health Care.

In 2019 the Legislature established a Universal Health Care Work Group (Work Group). The Work Group defined universal health care to mean that all Washington residents can access essential, effective, appropriate, and affordable health care services when and where they need it. The Work Group developed three models for realizing universal health care and analyzed each based on expected costs, access, equity, governance, quality, administration, affordability, and feasibility.

In 2021 the Legislature established the Universal Health Care Commission to prepare the state for the creation of a health care system that provides coverage and access through a universal

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financing system once the State acquired federal authority.

The State-Based Universal Health Care Act of 2023.

House Resolution 6270, introduced in the 118th Congress, establishes the option for states, or groups of states, to waive certain federal health insurance requirements and provide residents with health insurance benefits plans through state-administered programs. Such state programs must cover 95 percent of the residents in the state within five years, and the state program's benefits must be at least as comprehensive and affordable as the coverage under the equivalent federal programs. Federal programs include Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, certain federal tax credits, and premium assistance funds. The state programs are supported with funds from the replaced federal programs.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature requests the federal government to:

- create a universal health care program to ensure every resident in the state and country have timely access to health care services without incurring familial debt; or
- absent federal action, partner with the state to implement a single-payer health system by enacting an equivalent to the State-based Universal Health Care Act of 2023; or
- grant the state the appropriate waivers to remove restrictions on the state's ability to create a universal health care system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Upon enactment.