

RCW 48.41.060 Board powers and duties. (1) The board shall have the general powers and authority granted under the laws of this state to insurance companies, health care service contractors, and health maintenance organizations, licensed or registered to offer or provide the kinds of health coverage defined under this title. In addition thereto, the board shall:

(a) Establish appropriate rates, rate schedules, rate adjustments, expense allowances, claim reserve formulas and any other actuarial functions appropriate to the operation of the pool. Rates shall not be unreasonable in relation to the coverage provided, the risk experience, and expenses of providing the coverage. Rates and rate schedules may be adjusted for appropriate risk factors such as age and area variation in claim costs and shall take into consideration appropriate risk factors in accordance with established actuarial underwriting practices consistent with Washington state individual plan rating requirements under RCW 48.44.022 and 48.46.064;

(b) (i) Assess members of the pool in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, and make advance interim assessments as may be reasonable and necessary for the organizational or interim operating expenses. Any interim assessments will be credited as offsets against any regular assessments due following the close of the year.

(ii) Self-funded multiple employer welfare arrangements are subject to assessment under this subsection only in the event that assessments are not preempted by the employee retirement income security act of 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1001 et seq. The arrangements and the commissioner shall initially request an advisory opinion from the United States department of labor or obtain a declaratory ruling from a federal court on the legality of imposing assessments on these arrangements before imposing the assessment. Once the legality of the assessments has been determined, the multiple employer welfare arrangement certified by the insurance commissioner must begin payment of these assessments.

(iii) If there has not been a final determination of the legality of these assessments, then beginning on the earlier of (A) the date the fourth multiple employer welfare arrangement has been certified by the insurance commissioner, or (B) April 1, 2006, the arrangement shall deposit the assessments imposed by this subsection into an interest bearing escrow account maintained by the arrangement. Upon a final determination that the assessments are not preempted by the employee retirement income security act of 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1001 et seq., all funds in the interest bearing escrow account shall be transferred to the board;

(c) Issue policies of health coverage in accordance with the requirements of this chapter;

(d) Establish procedures for the administration of the premium discount provided under RCW 48.41.200(3)(a)(iii);

(e) Contract with the Washington state health care authority for the administration of the premium discounts provided under RCW 48.41.200(3)(a)(i) and (ii);

(f) Set a reasonable fee to be paid to an insurance producer licensed in Washington state for submitting an acceptable application for enrollment in the pool; and

(g) Provide certification to the commissioner when assessments will exceed the threshold level established in RCW 48.41.037.

(2) In addition thereto, the board may:

(a) Enter into contracts as are necessary or proper to carry out the provisions and purposes of this chapter including the authority, with the approval of the commissioner, to enter into contracts with similar pools of other states for the joint performance of common administrative functions, or with persons or other organizations for the performance of administrative functions;

(b) Sue or be sued, including taking any legal action as necessary to avoid the payment of improper claims against the pool or the coverage provided by or through the pool;

(c) Appoint appropriate legal, actuarial, and other committees as necessary to provide technical assistance in the operation of the pool, policy, and other contract design, and any other function within the authority of the pool; and

(d) Conduct periodic audits to assure the general accuracy of the financial data submitted to the pool, and the board shall cause the pool to have an annual audit of its operations by an independent certified public accountant.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require or authorize the adoption of rules under chapter 34.05 RCW. [2013 c 279 s 2; 2011 c 314 s 13; 2009 c 555 s 2; 2008 c 217 s 47; 2005 c 7 s 2; 2004 c 260 s 26; 2000 c 79 s 9; 1997 c 337 s 5; 1997 c 231 s 211; 1989 c 121 s 3; 1987 c 431 s 6.]

Effective date—2013 c 279 ss 2 and 3: "Sections 2 and 3 of this act take effect January 1, 2014." [2013 c 279 s 6.]

Finding—Intent—2013 c 279: "The federal patient protection and affordable care act of 2010, P.L. 111-148, as amended, prohibits the imposition of any preexisting condition coverage exceptions in the individual market for insurance coverage beginning January 1, 2014. The affordable care act also extends opportunities for individuals to enroll in comprehensive coverage in a health benefit exchange beginning January 1, 2014. The legislature finds that some individuals may still be barred from enrolling in the new comprehensive coverage options and it is the intent of the legislature to continue some limited access to the Washington state health insurance pool for a transitional period, and to provide for modification to the pool to reflect changes in federal law and insurance availability." [2013 c 279 s 1.]

Severability—Effective date—2008 c 217: See notes following RCW 48.03.020.

Effective date—2005 c 7: See note following RCW 48.14.0201.

Effective date—2004 c 260: See RCW 48.125.901.

Effective date—Severability—2000 c 79: See notes following RCW 48.04.010.

Short title—Part headings and captions not law—Severability—Effective dates—1997 c 231: See notes following RCW 48.43.005.

Report on implementation of 1987 c 431: "The board shall report to the commissioner and the appropriate committees of the legislature by April 1, 1990, on the implementation of this act. The report shall

include information regarding enrollment, coverage utilization, cost, and any problems with the program and suggest remedies." [1987 c 431 s 26.]