

RCW 48.46.272 Diabetes coverage—Definitions. The legislature finds that diabetes imposes a significant health risk and tremendous financial burden on the citizens and government of the state of Washington, and that access to the medically accepted standards of care for diabetes, its treatment and supplies, and self-management training and education is crucial to prevent or delay the short and long-term complications of diabetes and its attendant costs.

(1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Person with diabetes" means a person diagnosed by a health care provider as having insulin using diabetes, noninsulin using diabetes, or elevated blood glucose levels induced by pregnancy; and

(b) "Health care provider" means a health care provider as defined in RCW 48.43.005.

(2) All health benefit plans offered by health maintenance organizations, issued or renewed after January 1, 1998, shall provide benefits for at least the following services and supplies for persons with diabetes:

(a) For health benefit plans that include coverage for pharmacy services, appropriate and medically necessary equipment and supplies, as prescribed by a health care provider, that includes but is not limited to insulin, syringes, injection aids, blood glucose monitors, test strips for blood glucose monitors, visual reading and urine test strips, insulin pumps and accessories to the pumps, insulin infusion devices, prescriptive oral agents for controlling blood sugar levels, foot care appliances for prevention of complications associated with diabetes, and glucagon emergency kits; and

(b) For all health benefit plans, outpatient self-management training and education, including medical nutrition therapy, as ordered by the health care provider. Diabetes outpatient self-management training and education may be provided only by health care providers with expertise in diabetes. Nothing in this section prevents the health maintenance organization from restricting patients to seeing only health care providers who have signed participating provider agreements with the health maintenance organization or an insuring entity under contract with the health maintenance organization.

(3) Except as provided in RCW 48.43.780, coverage required under this section may be subject to customary cost-sharing provisions established for all other similar services or supplies within a policy.

(4) Health care coverage may not be reduced or eliminated due to this section.

(5) Services required under this section shall be covered when deemed medically necessary by the medical director, or his or her designee, subject to any referral and formulary requirements.

(6) The health maintenance organization need not include the coverage required in this section in a group contract offered to an employer or other group that offers to its eligible enrollees a self-insured health plan not subject to mandated benefits status under this title that does not offer coverage similar to that mandated under this section.

(7) This section does not apply to the health benefit plans that provide benefits identical to the schedule of services covered by the basic health plan. [2020 c 346 s 10; 2020 c 245 s 6; 2004 c 244 s 14; 1997 c 276 s 5.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2020 c 245 s 6 and by 2020 c 346 s 10, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Intent—2020 c 346: See note following RCW 70.14.165.

Application—2004 c 244: See note following RCW 48.21.045.

Effective date—1997 c 276: See note following RCW 41.05.185.