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**SENATE BILL 5611**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Mullet, King, Gildon, Lovick, Padden, Randall, Rolfes, Short, and L. Wilson; by request of Secretary of State

AN ACT Relating to providing an exemption to long-term care insurance for retired veterans and retirement eligible veterans; and amending RCW 50B.04.010, 50B.04.020, and 50B.04.085.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 50B.04.010 and 2021 c 113 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Account" means the long-term services and supports trust account created in RCW 50B.04.100.

(2) "Approved service" means long-term services and supports including, but not limited to:

(a) Adult day services;

(b) Care transition coordination;

(c) Memory care;

(d) Adaptive equipment and technology;

(e) Environmental modification;

(f) Personal emergency response system;

(g) Home safety evaluation;

(h) Respite for family caregivers;

(i) Home delivered meals;

(j) Transportation;

(k) Dementia supports;

(l) Education and consultation;

(m) Eligible relative care;

(n) Professional services;

(o) Services that assist paid and unpaid family members caring for eligible individuals, including training for individuals providing care who are not otherwise employed as long-term care workers under RCW 74.39A.074;

(p) In-home personal care;

(q) Assisted living services;

(r) Adult family home services; and

(s) Nursing home services.

(3) "Benefit unit" means up to one hundred dollars paid by the department of social and health services to a long-term services and supports provider as reimbursement for approved services provided to an eligible beneficiary on a specific date. The benefit unit must be adjusted annually at a rate no greater than the Washington state consumer price index, as determined solely by the council. Any changes adopted by the council shall be subject to revision by the legislature.

(4) "Commission" means the long-term services and supports trust commission established in RCW 50B.04.030.

(5) "Council" means the long-term services and supports trust council established in RCW 50B.04.040.

(6) "Eligible beneficiary" means a qualified individual who is age eighteen or older, residing in the state of Washington, has been determined to meet the minimum level of assistance with activities of daily living necessary to receive benefits through the trust program, as established in this chapter, and has not exhausted the lifetime limit of benefit units.

(7) "Employee" has the meaning provided in RCW 50A.05.010.

(8) "Employer" has the meaning provided in RCW 50A.05.010.

(9) "Employment" has the meaning provided in RCW 50A.05.010.

(10) "Exempt employee" means a person who has been granted a premium assessment exemption by the employment security department.

(11) "Long-term services and supports provider" means an entity that meets the qualifications applicable in law to the approved service they provide, including a qualified or certified home care aide, licensed assisted living facility, licensed adult family home, licensed nursing home, licensed in-home services agency, adult day services program, vendor, instructor, qualified family member, or other entities as registered by the department of social and health services.

(12) "Premium" or "premiums" means the payments required by RCW 50B.04.080 and paid to the employment security department for deposit in the account created in RCW 50B.04.100.

(13) "Program" means the long-term services and supports trust program established in this chapter.

(14) "Qualified family member" means a relative of an eligible beneficiary qualified to meet requirements established in state law for the approved service they provide that would be required of any other long-term services and supports provider to receive payments from the state.

(15) "Qualified individual" means an individual who meets the duration of payment requirements, as established in this chapter.

(16) "Retired veteran and retirement eligible veteran" means a person who has served in the armed service of the United States and is eligible for retirement or has retired from the armed service either after a duration of service necessary to qualify for veterans benefits or due to disability qualification for veterans benefits.

(17) "State actuary" means the office of the state actuary created in RCW 44.44.010.

((~~(17)~~)) (18) "Wage or wages" means all remuneration paid by an employer to an employee. Remuneration has the meaning provided in RCW 50A.05.010. All wages are subject to a premium assessment and not limited by the commissioner of the employment security department, as provided under RCW 50A.10.030(4).

**Sec.**  RCW 50B.04.020 and 2021 c 113 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The health care authority, the department of social and health services, the office of the state actuary, and the employment security department each have distinct responsibilities in the implementation and administration of the program. In the performance of their activities, they shall actively collaborate to realize program efficiencies and provide persons served by the program with a well-coordinated experience.

(2) The health care authority shall:

(a) Track the use of lifetime benefit units to verify the individual's status as an eligible beneficiary as determined by the department of social and health services;

(b) Ensure approved services are provided through audits or service verification processes within the service provider payment system for registered long-term services and supports providers and recoup any inappropriate payments;

(c) Establish criteria for the payment of benefits to registered long-term services and supports providers under RCW 50B.04.070;

(d) Establish rules and procedures for benefit coordination when the eligible beneficiary is also funded for medicaid and other long-term services and supports, including medicare, coverage through the department of labor and industries, and private long-term care coverage; and

(e) Adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement and administer the activities specified in this section related to the program.

(3) The department of social and health services shall:

(a) Make determinations regarding an individual's status as an eligible beneficiary under RCW 50B.04.060;

(b) Approve long-term services and supports eligible for payment as approved services under the program, as informed by the commission;

(c) Register long-term services and supports providers that meet minimum qualifications;

(d) Discontinue the registration of long-term services and supports providers that: (i) Fail to meet the minimum qualifications applicable in law to the approved service that they provide; or (ii) violate the operational standards of the program;

(e) Disburse payments of benefits to registered long-term services and supports providers, utilizing and leveraging existing payment systems for the provision of approved services to eligible beneficiaries under RCW 50B.04.070;

(f) Prepare and distribute written or electronic materials to qualified individuals, eligible beneficiaries, and the public as deemed necessary by the commission to inform them of program design and updates;

(g) Provide customer service and address questions and complaints, including referring individuals to other appropriate agencies;

(h) Provide administrative and operational support to the commission;

(i) Track data useful in monitoring and informing the program, as identified by the commission; and

(j) Adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement and administer the activities specified in this section related to the program.

(4) The employment security department shall:

(a) Collect and assess employee premiums as provided in RCW 50B.04.080;

(b) Assist the commission, council, and state actuary in monitoring the solvency and financial status of the program;

(c) Perform investigations to determine the compliance of premium payments in RCW 50B.04.080 and 50B.04.090 in coordination with the same activities conducted under the family and medical leave act, Title 50A RCW, to the extent possible;

(d) Make determinations regarding an individual's status as a qualified individual under RCW 50B.04.050; and

(e) Adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement and administer the activities specified in this section related to the program.

(5) The office of the state actuary shall:

(a) Beginning January 1, 2024, and biennially thereafter, perform an actuarial audit and valuation of the long-term services and supports trust fund. Additional or more frequent actuarial audits and valuations may be performed at the request of the council;

(b) Make recommendations to the council and the legislature on actions necessary to maintain trust solvency. The recommendations must include options to redesign or reduce benefit units, approved services, or both, to prevent or eliminate any unfunded actuarially accrued liability in the trust or to maintain solvency; and

(c) Select and contract for such actuarial, research, technical, and other consultants as the actuary deems necessary to perform its duties under chapter 363, Laws of 2019.

(6) By October 1, 2021, the employment security department and the department of social and health services shall jointly conduct outreach to provide employers with educational materials to ensure employees are aware of the program and that the premium assessments will begin on January 1, 2022. In conducting the outreach, the employment security department and the department of social and health services shall provide on a public website information that explains the program and premium assessment in an easy to understand format. Outreach information must be available in English and other primary languages as defined in RCW 74.04.025.

(7) By July 1, 2022, the employment security department and the department of social and health services shall jointly conduct outreach to retired veterans and retirement eligible veterans living in the state and provide employers with educational materials to ensure employees are aware of the option available to retired veterans to exempt themselves from the program. In conducting the outreach, the employment security department and the department of social and health services shall provide on a public website information that explains the program and premium assessment in an easy to understand format, and the procedure for a retired veteran and retirement eligible veterans to exempt themselves from the program. Outreach information must be available in English and other primary languages as defined in RCW 74.04.025.

**Sec.**  RCW 50B.04.085 and 2021 c 113 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) An employee who attests that the employee has long-term care insurance purchased before November 1, 2021, may apply for an exemption from the premium assessment under RCW 50B.04.080.

(b) A retired veteran or retirement eligible veteran may request exemption from the premium assessment under RCW 50B.04.080 by attesting to their service and eligibility for veterans benefits.

(c) An exempt employee may not become a qualified individual or eligible beneficiary and is permanently ineligible for coverage under this title.

(2) The employment security department must accept applications for exemptions for retired veterans and retirement eligible veterans at any time.

(3) The employment security department is not required to verify the attestation of an employee that the employee is a retired veteran or a retirement eligible veteran.

(4)(a) The employment security department must accept applications for exemptions only from October 1, 2021, through December 31, 2022.

(b) Only employees who are eighteen years of age or older may apply for an exemption.

((~~(3)~~)) (5) The employment security department is not required to verify the attestation of an employee that the employee has long-term care insurance.

((~~(4)~~)) (6) Approved exemptions will take effect on the first day of the quarter immediately following the approval of the exemption.

((~~(5)~~)) (7) Exempt employees are not entitled to a refund of any premium deductions made before the effective date of an approved exemption.

((~~(6)~~)) (8) An exempt employee must provide written notification to all current and future employers of an approved exemption.

((~~(7)~~)) (9) If an exempt employee fails to notify an employer of an exemption, the exempt employee is not entitled to a refund of any premium deductions made before notification is provided.

((~~(8)~~)) (10) Employers must not deduct premiums after being notified by an employee of an approved exemption.

(a) Employers must retain written notifications of exemptions received from employees.

(b) An employer who deducts premiums after being notified by the employee of an exemption is solely responsible for refunding to the employee any premiums deducted after the notification.

(c) The employer is not entitled to a refund from the employment security department for any premiums remitted to the employment security department that were deducted from exempt employees.

((~~(9)~~)) (11) The department must adopt rules necessary to implement and administer the activities specified in this section related to the program, including rules on the submission and processing of applications under this section.

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