

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1535

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 31, 1999

Title: An act relating to health maintenance organizations' reimbursement of podiatric physicians and surgeons.

Brief Description: Reimbursing podiatric physicians and surgeons.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Parlette, Cody, Schual-Berke, Romero, Ruderman, Esser, Hatfield, Boldt, Campbell, Pflug and Alexander).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/18/99, 3/31/99 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin, Johnson and Winsley.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Three classes of physicians are authorized to provide foot care services within their scope of practice: allopathic physicians and surgeons (M.D.), osteopathic physicians and surgeons (D.O.), and podiatric physicians and surgeons (D.P.M.).

Current law prohibits disability carriers and health care service contractors from discriminating between allopathic, osteopathic, and podiatric physicians and surgeons. However, a similar law does not exist as to health maintenance organizations. Concern exists that this allows HMOs to reimburse podiatric physicians less than other physicians for performing identical treatments or procedures.

Summary of Bill: Except to the extent that an HMO contracts with a group medical practice which only treats that organization's patients, it may not discriminate in the terms and conditions, including reimbursement, for the provision of foot care services between physicians and surgeons licensed as podiatric physicians and surgeons, allopathic physicians and surgeons, or osteopaths.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is identical to the bill which previously passed the Senate. It is not a mandate, and will not increase health care costs. It is simply intended to extend current law to all types of health carriers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Frank Morrison, WA State Podiatric Medical Assn. (pro).