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**SENATE BILL 5179**

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**State of Washington                      65th Legislature                      2017 Regular Session**

**By Senators Bailey, Keiser, Palumbo, Hasegawa, and Conway**

Read first time 01/16/17. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1            AN ACT Relating to requiring coverage for hearing instruments  
2 under public employee and medicaid programs; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 41.05 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 74.09 RCW.

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

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    A new section is added to chapter 41.05  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7            (1) A health plan offered to employees and their covered  
8 dependents under this chapter issued or renewed on or after January  
9 1, 2018, must include coverage for hearing instruments when medically  
10 necessary. Coverage must include a new hearing instrument every five  
11 years, a new hearing instrument when alterations to the existing  
12 hearing instrument cannot meet the needs of the patient, and services  
13 and supplies such as the initial assessment, fitting, adjustment, and  
14 auditory training.

15            (2) The hearing instrument must be prescribed by a licensed  
16 audiologist and dispensed by a licensed audiologist or hearing aid  
17 specialist.

18            (3) For the purposes of this section, "hearing instrument" and  
19 "hearing aid specialist" have the same meaning as defined in RCW  
20 18.35.010.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 74.09  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) The medical assistance coverage offered under this chapter  
4    issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2018, must include coverage  
5    for hearing instruments when medically necessary. Coverage must  
6    include a new hearing instrument every five years, a new hearing  
7    instrument when alterations to the existing hearing instrument cannot  
8    meet the needs of the patient, and services and supplies such as the  
9    initial assessment, fitting, adjustment, and auditory training.

10       (2) The hearing instrument must be prescribed by a licensed  
11    audiologist and dispensed by a licensed audiologist or hearing aid  
12    specialist.

13       (3) For purposes of this section, "hearing instrument" and  
14    "hearing aid specialist" have the same meaning as defined in RCW  
15    18.35.010.

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