
Health Care Committee

HB 2890

Brief Description: Requiring plans that provide coverage for prostheses to provide coverage for hearing aids.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Chase, Clibborn, Lovick, McCoy, Campbell, G. Simpson and McDermott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires health carriers and state purchased health care programs that provide coverage for prostheses to include coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Hearing Date: 2/11/04

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Approximately 9 percent of the people in the United States have hearing loss that results in communication problems. Over half of the 26 million hard of hearing adults in the United States are age 65 or less, and 72 percent report that their hearing loss resulted from factors other than aging. Children with hearing difficulties need hearing aids or cochlear implants to enable them to learn language and participate fully in the education process. Children require new hearing aids or cochlear implants regularly as they grow. Not all health insurance carriers cover hearing aids or cochlear implants, and those who do often limit the coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Summary of Bill:

All health carriers and state purchased health care programs that provide coverage for prostheses must also include coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.