

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1441

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to health insurance coverage for children.

**Brief Description:** Providing access to health insurance for children.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Clibborn, Morrell, Campbell, Cody, Tom, Moeller, Schual-Berke, Wallace, Grant, Williams, Lovick, Ormsby, Chase, Kessler, Kagi, Hunt, Appleton, Darneille, Upthegrove, Sells, Roberts, Conway, Miloscia, Fromhold, P. Sullivan, Santos, Takko, Green, Wood, Simpson, Hasegawa and Dickerson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 2/8/05, 2/15/05 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Prohibits premium requirements for children or pregnant women eligible for medical assistance or the children's health program.
- Authorizes the children's health program to provide a different amount, duration, and scope of services than that provided through the medical assistance program.
- Increases the eligibility for the children's health program from the Federal Poverty Level to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller and Schual-Berke.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Condotta, Hinkle and Skinner.

**Staff:** Dave Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:**

The federal government granted a request from the State of Washington to charge monthly premiums for medical, dental, and mental health coverage of children whose family income is above the poverty level. The Department of Social and Health Services has the statutory authority to establish, copayment, deductible, coinsurance, or other cost-sharing requirements for recipients of any medical program. The amount, scope, and duration of health care services for children served through the children's health program is the same as that provided to children through the medical assistance program operated by the Department of Social and Health Services. Eligibility for the children's health program for undocumented children is currently set at the Federal Poverty Level.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Department of Social and Health Services is prohibited from establishing premium requirements for children or pregnant women who are eligible for either the medical assistance or children's health programs. The requirement that the University of Washington conduct an evaluation of the maternity care access program is deleted. The eligibility for the children's health program for undocumented children is increased from the Federal Poverty Level to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill removes the 12-month eligibility reauthorization cycle and the authorization to conduct outreach activities to sign people up for publicly funded health care. The eligibility for undocumented children through the children's health program is increased from the Federal Poverty Level to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 4, 2005.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 2005.

**Testimony For:** Undocumented children have lost health coverage through recent budget decisions. These children need access to regular, preventive health care, and ongoing health insurance.

(Neutral) If the Legislature chooses to provide health coverage to undocumented children through the children's health program and not treat it as an entitlement, the Department of Social and Health Services should be authorized to cap enrollment.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Clibborn, prime sponsor; Dr. Beth Harvey, American Academy of Pediatrics of Washington; Anita Mondian, Yakima Neighborhood Health and Children's Alliance; and Kevin Glackin-Coley, Children's Alliance.

(Neutral) Doug Porter, Department of Social and Health Services.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** (In support) Bill Daley, Washington Citizen Action; Paul Benz, Lutheran Public Policy and Washington Association of Churches; Mary Kenfield, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; and Len McComb, Community Health Network and Washington State Hospital Association.