

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1096

As Passed House:

February 24, 2021

Title: An act relating to nonmedicare plans offered through the Washington state health insurance pool.

Brief Description: Concerning nonmedicare plans offered through the Washington state health insurance pool.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Cody, Leavitt, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli and Macri.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/20/21, 1/27/21 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/8/21, 2/9/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/24/21, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the December 31, 2022, expiration date for non-Medicare coverage offered through the Washington State Health Insurance Pool.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Davis, Harris, Macri, Maycumber, Riccelli, Rude, Simmons, Stonier, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chandler, Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Frame, Hansen, Harris, Hoff, Jacobsen, Johnson, J., Lekanoff, Pollet, Rude, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Steele, Stonier, Sullivan and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke.

Staff: Meghan Morris (786-7119).

Background:

The Washington State Health Insurance Pool (WSHIP), Washington's high risk pool, provides coverage for:

- individuals ineligible for Medicare who were enrolled in WSHIP health plans prior to December 31, 2013, and individuals ineligible for Medicare who live in a county where non-catastrophic individual health coverage is unavailable; and
- individuals eligible for Medicare who do not have access to a reasonable choice of Medicare Advantage plans and provide evidence of rejection for medical reasons, restrictive riders, an up-rated premium, preexisting condition limitations, or lack of access to a comprehensive Medicare supplemental plan.

The costs of coverage through the WSHIP is paid through premiums and assessments on health insurers. The WSHIP has approximately 200 enrollees in individual, non-Medicare coverage, and 1,100 enrollees in Medicare coverage.

After December 31, 2022, individual, non-Medicare coverage will no longer be offered through the WSHIP.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date for individual, non-Medicare coverage purchased through the WSHIP is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Health Care & Wellness):

(In support) The WSHIP is a nonprofit established by the Legislature that helps keep high-cost individuals out of the community risk pool, which benefits everyone. Non-Medicare coverage offered by the WSHIP has an expiration date that has been extended several times. This bill removes that expiration date. This will ensure that coverage is uninterrupted and will preserve an important safety net in the event that individual coverage is not available in one or more counties. The people who purchase WSHIP coverage are often the sickest and most vulnerable, with conditions including HIV/AIDS, kidney disease, hemophilia, and cancer. There is broad support among stakeholders for extending this coverage.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):

(In support) This bill removes the scheduled December 31, 2022, sunset date for the Washington State Health Insurance Pool (WSHIP) non-Medicare program to ensure coverage and uninterrupted care for WSHIP's medically fragile, high-cost individuals. Many of these individuals have HIV/AIDS. This preserves an important safety net for Washington residents in the event individual coverage is not available in one or more counties. This bill has broad support in the health care community. The Legislature has extended the sunset date before, but it is now time to remove the sunset provisions.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Health Care & Wellness): Representative Schmick, prime sponsor; Sydney Zvara, Washington State Health Insurance Pool; and Chris Bandoli, Association of Washington Healthcare Plans.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations): Sydney Zvara, Washington State Health Insurance Pool.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Health Care & Wellness): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.