AN ACT Relating to requiring health carriers to reimburse advanced registered nurse practitioners at the same rate as physicians for the same services; adding a new section to chapter 48.43 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. Given the gravity of the COVID-19 crisis and the threat future pandemics present to the residents of Washington, the legislature recognizes the importance of supporting health care practitioners throughout the state. This act intends to help maintain a sufficient number of health care providers, especially in underserved and rural communities, by requiring health carriers to reimburse advanced registered nurse practitioners and physicians the same rate for providing the same health care services.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 48.43 RCW to read as follows:
(1) For health plans issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2022, a health carrier may not reimburse a contracted health care practitioner who is an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW in an amount less than the allowed amount that the health carrier would reimburse for the same service.
if provided by a contracted provider who is a physician licensed under chapter 18.57 or 18.71 RCW in the same service area as defined in WAC 284-43-0160.

(2) A health carrier may not reduce the reimbursement amount paid to physicians licensed under chapter 18.57 or 18.71 RCW to comply with this section.

(3) This section does not apply to advanced registered nurse practitioners who are employees of a health maintenance organization regulated under chapter 48.46 RCW.

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