

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1678

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to availability of psychologists' services to medical assistance recipients.

Brief Description: Including psychologists' services in medical assistance available to medical assistance recipients.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Anderson, Leonard, Prince, Wang, Ferguson, Locke, R. King, R. Johnson, Jacobsen, Holland, Brekke, Spanel, Fraser, Morris and Wineberry.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 28, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Brekke; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services provides mental health services to eligible persons through the Medicaid program. Psychiatrists are reimbursed through the Medicaid program for mental health services they provide. Psychologists are not currently eligible for Medicaid reimbursement for mental health services they provide.

Summary of Bill: The Medicaid program, through the Department of Social and Health Services, will reimburse psychologists for evaluations and psychotherapy from July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1993. The department will assess any cost savings resulting from providing psychologists' services through the Medicaid program. The department is authorized to require participating psychologists to follow cost-containment requirements.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 12, 1991.

Effective Date: July 1, 1991.

Testimony For: Psychologists provide quality mental health services to individuals and families. If psychologists were eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursement for mental health services they provide, the State will realize a cost savings and clients will receive professional services.

Testimony Against: Expanding the number of mental health service providers reimbursed through the Medicaid program may result in an increased cost because of expanded access to services.

Witnesses: Lucy Homans and Steve Langor (support); Pat Thibaudeau, Washington Community Mental Health Association (support); and Leslie James, Department of Social and Health Services (opposed).