
Health Care Committee

HB 1336

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

Sponsors: Representatives Flannigan, Morrell, O'Brien, Campbell, Kirby, Hudgins, Darneille, Lantz, Hunt, Appleton, Moeller, Kenney, Kagi, Dickerson, McDermott, Santos, Chase and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

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

Hearing Date: 2/17/05

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 to enable them to learn language and participate fully in the education process, and require new hearing aids regularly as they grow. Not all health insurance carriers cover hearing aids, and those who do often limit the coverage for hearing aids.

Summary of Bill:

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2005.

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