
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1336

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Flannigan, Morrell, O'Brien, Campbell, Kirby, Hudgins, Darneille, Lantz, Hunt, Appleton, Moeller, Kenney, Kagi, Dickerson, McDermott, Santos, Chase and Ormsby)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/05.

1 AN ACT Relating to coverage for hearing aids; adding a new section
2 to chapter 41.05 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.20 RCW; adding
3 a new section to chapter 48.21 RCW; adding a new section to chapter
4 48.44 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.46 RCW; creating a new
5 section; and providing an effective date.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the inability to
8 purchase hearing aids adversely affects hearing-impaired people of all
9 ages and impacts the employment and educational opportunities of
10 hearing-impaired children and adults in Washington state by limiting
11 communication options. To provide these individuals with equal
12 opportunity and protect the well-being of the population, the
13 legislature intends to establish insurance coverage provisions for
14 hearing aids.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 41.05 RCW
16 to read as follows:

17 All state-purchased health care that provides coverage for
18 prostheses shall include coverage for hearing aids. Covered hearing

1 instruments and related services shall be recommended by the patient's
2 physician or advanced registered nurse practitioner as authorized by
3 the nursing care quality assurance commission under chapter 18.79 RCW
4 or physician assistant under chapter 18.71A or 18.57A RCW.

5 This section shall not be construed to prevent the application of
6 standard health plan provisions applicable to prosthesis benefits, such
7 as deductibles, copayments, medical necessity, quantity limitations, or
8 preauthorizations. This section does not limit the authority of the
9 state health care authority to negotiate rates and contract with
10 specific providers for the delivery of prostheses. The replacement of
11 hearing aids shall be limited as follows: Every four years for an
12 adult; every two years for children between the ages of two and
13 eighteen; and no more than three times a year for infants and toddlers
14 up to two years of age. This section does not apply to medicare
15 supplement policies or supplemental contracts covering a specified
16 disease or other limited benefits.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 48.20 RCW
18 to read as follows:

19 An insurer that offers to any individual a health benefit plan that
20 provides coverage for prostheses shall include coverage for hearing
21 aids. Covered hearing instruments and related services shall be
22 recommended by the patient's physician or advanced registered nurse
23 practitioner as authorized by the nursing care quality assurance
24 commission under chapter 18.79 RCW or physician assistant under chapter
25 18.71A or 18.57A RCW.

26 This section shall not be construed to prevent the application of
27 standard health plan provisions applicable to prosthesis benefits, such
28 as deductibles, copayments, medical necessity, quantity limitations, or
29 preauthorizations. This section does not limit the authority of a
30 carrier to negotiate rates and contract with specific providers for the
31 delivery of prostheses. The replacement of hearing aids shall be
32 limited as follows: Every four years for an adult; every two years for
33 children between the ages of two and eighteen; and no more than three
34 times a year for infants and toddlers up to two years of age. This
35 section does not apply to medicare supplement policies or supplemental
36 contracts covering a specified disease or other limited benefits.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 48.21 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 A group insurance contract or blanket disability insurance contract
4 that provides coverage for prostheses shall include coverage for
5 hearing aids. Covered hearing instruments and related services shall
6 be recommended by the patient's physician or advanced registered nurse
7 practitioner as authorized by the nursing care quality assurance
8 commission under chapter 18.79 RCW or physician assistant under chapter
9 18.71A or 18.57A RCW.

10 This section shall not be construed to prevent the application of
11 standard health plan provisions applicable to prosthesis benefits, such
12 as deductibles, copayments, medical necessity, quantity limitations, or
13 preauthorizations. This section does not limit the authority of a
14 carrier to negotiate rates and contract with specific providers for the
15 delivery of prostheses. The replacement of hearing aids shall be
16 limited as follows: Every four years for an adult; every two years for
17 children between the ages of two and eighteen; and no more than three
18 times a year for infants and toddlers up to two years of age. This
19 section does not apply to medicare supplement policies or supplemental
20 contracts covering a specified disease or other limited benefits.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 48.44 RCW
22 to read as follows:

23 A health service contractor that provides coverage for prostheses
24 shall include coverage for hearing aids. Covered hearing instruments
25 and related services shall be recommended by the patient's physician or
26 advanced registered nurse practitioner as authorized by the nursing
27 care quality assurance commission under chapter 18.79 RCW or physician
28 assistant under chapter 18.71A or 18.57A RCW.

29 This section shall not be construed to prevent the application of
30 standard health plan provisions applicable to prosthesis benefits, such
31 as deductibles, copayments, medical necessity, quantity limitations, or
32 preauthorizations. This section does not limit the authority of the
33 carrier to negotiate rates and contract with specific providers for the
34 delivery of prostheses. The replacement of hearing aids shall be
35 limited as follows: Every four years for an adult; every two years for
36 children between the ages of two and eighteen; and no more than three

1 times a year for infants and toddlers up to two years of age. This
2 section does not apply to medicare supplement policies or supplemental
3 contracts covering a specified disease or other limited benefits.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 48.46 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 A health maintenance organization that provides coverage for
7 prostheses shall include coverage for hearing aids. Covered hearing
8 instruments and related services shall be recommended by the patient's
9 physician or advanced registered nurse practitioner as authorized by
10 the nursing care quality assurance commission under chapter 18.79 RCW
11 or physician assistant under chapter 18.71A or 18.57A RCW.

12 This section shall not be construed to prevent the application of
13 standard health plan provisions applicable to prosthesis benefits, such
14 as deductibles, copayments, medical necessity, quantity limitations, or
15 preauthorizations. This section does not limit the authority of the
16 carrier to negotiate rates and contract with specific providers for the
17 delivery of prostheses. The replacement of hearing aids shall be
18 limited as follows: Every four years for an adult; every two years for
19 children between the ages of two and eighteen; and no more than three
20 times a year for infants and toddlers up to two years of age. This
21 section does not apply to medicare supplement policies or supplemental
22 contracts covering a specified disease or other limited benefits.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This act takes effect January 1, 2006.

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