
**Select Committee on
Environmental Health**

HB 3059

Brief Description: Requiring coverage for lead blood level assessments.

Sponsors: Representative Hudgins.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The Department of Social and Health Services must provide coverage for lead blood level assessments for any Medicaid-eligible children under 21 years old.

Hearing Date: 1/22/08

Staff: Ashley Pedersen (786-7303).

Background:

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, exposure to lead is highly dangerous, especially to children ages six and younger. Young children are more likely to ingest lead dust, and as such, are at higher risk for lead poisoning. In addition, children are more likely to be affected by lead poisoning than adults due to their smaller and still developing bodies. Lead poisoning in children can cause irreversible learning difficulties, mental retardation, and delayed neurological and physical development.

Medicaid coverage is available only to people with a limited income and who meet certain other requirements. These other requirements may be in regards to age, whether you are pregnant, disabled, blind, or aged; your income and resources (like bank accounts, real property, or other items that can be sold for cash); and whether you are a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted immigrant.

Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) service is a comprehensive and preventive child health program for individuals under the age of 21. The EPSDT benefit, in accordance with Section 1905(r) of the Social Security Act, must include periodic screening, vision, dental, and hearing services, as well as lead toxicity screening.

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

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) require that a blood lead test must be used when screening Medicaid-eligible children. All children receive the lead toxicity screening at 12 months and 24 months of age. If they have not been previously screened for lead poisoning, children between the ages of 36 months and 72 months of age must receive a screening blood lead test. A blood lead test result equal to or greater than 10 ug/dl obtained by capillary specimen (fingerstick) must be confirmed using a venous blood sample.

According to the March 2003 Washington State Lead Reporting Update by the Department of Health, the number of children tested for blood lead levels is quite low in Washington. The Department of Health estimates that only about four percent of Washington children ever receive a blood lead test.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services must provide coverage for lead blood level assessments for any eligible children under 21 years old. This must be done in accordance with Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment services as defined in Section 1905 of Title XIX of the Federal Social Security act and its implementing regulations and guidelines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2008.

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