
SENATE BILL 5449

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators Parlette, Keiser, Becker, Bailey, Dammeier, Frockt, Ericksen, and Schlicher

Read first time 01/30/13. Referred to Committee on Health Care .

1 AN ACT Relating to modification of the Washington state health
2 insurance pool; amending RCW 48.41.060 and 48.41.160; reenacting and
3 amending RCW 48.41.100; adding a new section to chapter 44.28 RCW;
4 creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The federal patient protection and
7 affordable care act of 2010, P.L. 111-148, as amended, prohibits the
8 imposition of any preexisting condition coverage exceptions in the
9 individual market for insurance coverage beginning January 1, 2014.
10 The affordable care act also extends opportunities for individuals to
11 enroll in comprehensive coverage in a health benefit exchange beginning
12 January 1, 2014. The legislature finds that some individuals may still
13 be barred from enrolling in the new comprehensive coverage options and
14 it is the intent of the legislature to continue some limited access to
15 the Washington state health insurance pool for a transitional period,
16 and to provide for modification to the pool to reflect changes in
17 federal law and insurance availability.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 48.41.060 and 2011 c 314 s 13 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 (1) The board shall have the general powers and authority granted
4 under the laws of this state to insurance companies, health care
5 service contractors, and health maintenance organizations, licensed or
6 registered to offer or provide the kinds of health coverage defined
7 under this title. In addition thereto, the board shall:

8 (a) ~~((Designate or establish the standard health questionnaire to
9 be used under RCW 48.41.100 and 48.43.018, including the form and
10 content of the standard health questionnaire and the method of its
11 application. The questionnaire must provide for an objective
12 evaluation of an individual's health status by assigning a discreet
13 measure, such as a system of point scoring to each individual. The
14 questionnaire must not contain any questions related to pregnancy, and
15 pregnancy shall not be a basis for coverage by the pool. The
16 questionnaire shall be designed such that it is reasonably expected to
17 identify the eight percent of persons who are the most costly to treat
18 who are under individual coverage in health benefit plans, as defined
19 in RCW 48.43.005, in Washington state or are covered by the pool, if
20 applied to all such persons;~~

21 (b) ~~Obtain from a member of the American academy of actuaries, who
22 is independent of the board, a certification that the standard health
23 questionnaire meets the requirements of (a) of this subsection;~~

24 (c) ~~Approve the standard health questionnaire and any modifications
25 needed to comply with this chapter. The standard health questionnaire
26 shall be submitted to an actuary for certification, modified as
27 necessary, and approved at least every thirty six months unless at the
28 time when certification is required the pool will be discontinued
29 before the end of the succeeding thirty six month period. The
30 designation and approval of the standard health questionnaire by the
31 board shall not be subject to review and approval by the commissioner.
32 The standard health questionnaire or any modification thereto shall not
33 be used until ninety days after public notice of the approval of the
34 questionnaire or any modification thereto, except that the initial
35 standard health questionnaire approved for use by the board after March
36 23, 2000, may be used immediately following public notice of such
37 approval;~~

1 ~~(d)~~) Establish appropriate rates, rate schedules, rate
2 adjustments, expense allowances, claim reserve formulas and any other
3 actuarial functions appropriate to the operation of the pool. Rates
4 shall not be unreasonable in relation to the coverage provided, the
5 risk experience, and expenses of providing the coverage. Rates and
6 rate schedules may be adjusted for appropriate risk factors such as age
7 and area variation in claim costs and shall take into consideration
8 appropriate risk factors in accordance with established actuarial
9 underwriting practices consistent with Washington state individual plan
10 rating requirements under RCW 48.44.022 and 48.46.064;

11 ~~(e)~~) (b)(i) Assess members of the pool in accordance with the
12 provisions of this chapter, and make advance interim assessments as may
13 be reasonable and necessary for the organizational or interim operating
14 expenses. Any interim assessments will be credited as offsets against
15 any regular assessments due following the close of the year.

16 (ii) Self-funded multiple employer welfare arrangements are subject
17 to assessment under this subsection only in the event that assessments
18 are not preempted by the employee retirement income security act of
19 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1001 et seq. The arrangements and the
20 commissioner shall initially request an advisory opinion from the
21 United States department of labor or obtain a declaratory ruling from
22 a federal court on the legality of imposing assessments on these
23 arrangements before imposing the assessment. Once the legality of the
24 assessments has been determined, the multiple employer welfare
25 arrangement certified by the insurance commissioner must begin payment
26 of these assessments.

27 (iii) If there has not been a final determination of the legality
28 of these assessments, then beginning on the earlier of (A) the date the
29 fourth multiple employer welfare arrangement has been certified by the
30 insurance commissioner, or (B) April 1, 2006, the arrangement shall
31 deposit the assessments imposed by this subsection into an interest
32 bearing escrow account maintained by the arrangement. Upon a final
33 determination that the assessments are not preempted by the employee
34 retirement income security act of 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1001
35 et seq., all funds in the interest bearing escrow account shall be
36 transferred to the board;

37 ~~(f)~~) (c) Issue policies of health coverage in accordance with
38 the requirements of this chapter;

1 ~~((g))~~ (d) Establish procedures for the administration of the
2 premium discount provided under RCW 48.41.200(3)(a)(iii);

3 ~~((h))~~ (e) Contract with the Washington state health care
4 authority for the administration of the premium discounts provided
5 under RCW 48.41.200(3)(a) (i) and (ii);

6 ~~((i))~~ (f) Set a reasonable fee to be paid to an insurance
7 producer licensed in Washington state for submitting an acceptable
8 application for enrollment in the pool; and

9 ~~((j))~~ (g) Provide certification to the commissioner when
10 assessments will exceed the threshold level established in RCW
11 48.41.037.

12 (2) In addition thereto, the board may:

13 (a) Enter into contracts as are necessary or proper to carry out
14 the provisions and purposes of this chapter including the authority,
15 with the approval of the commissioner, to enter into contracts with
16 similar pools of other states for the joint performance of common
17 administrative functions, or with persons or other organizations for
18 the performance of administrative functions;

19 (b) Sue or be sued, including taking any legal action as necessary
20 to avoid the payment of improper claims against the pool or the
21 coverage provided by or through the pool;

22 (c) Appoint appropriate legal, actuarial, and other committees as
23 necessary to provide technical assistance in the operation of the pool,
24 policy, and other contract design, and any other function within the
25 authority of the pool; and

26 (d) Conduct periodic audits to assure the general accuracy of the
27 financial data submitted to the pool, and the board shall cause the
28 pool to have an annual audit of its operations by an independent
29 certified public accountant.

30 (3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require or
31 authorize the adoption of rules under chapter 34.05 RCW.

32 **Sec. 3.** RCW 48.41.100 and 2011 c 315 s 5 and 2011 c 314 s 15 are
33 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

34 (1)(a) The following persons who are residents of this state are
35 eligible for pool coverage:

36 (i) ~~((Any person who provides evidence of a carrier's decision not
37 to accept him or her for enrollment in an individual health benefit~~

1 ~~plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005 based upon, and within ninety days of~~
2 ~~the receipt of, the results of the standard health questionnaire~~
3 ~~designated by the board and administered by health carriers under RCW~~
4 ~~48.43.018;~~

5 ~~(ii) Any person who continues to be eligible for pool coverage~~
6 ~~based upon the results of the standard health questionnaire designated~~
7 ~~by the board and administered by the pool administrator pursuant to~~
8 ~~subsection (3) of this section;~~

9 ~~(iii) Any person who resides in a county of the state where no~~
10 ~~carrier or insurer eligible under chapter 48.15 RCW offers to the~~
11 ~~public an individual health benefit plan other than a catastrophic~~
12 ~~health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005 at the time of application to~~
13 ~~the pool, and who makes direct application to the pool)) Any resident~~
14 ~~of the state not eligible for medicare coverage or medicaid coverage,~~
15 ~~and residing in a county where an individual health plan other than a~~
16 ~~catastrophic health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005 is not offered to~~
17 ~~the resident at the time of application to the pool, whether through~~
18 ~~the health benefit exchange operated pursuant to chapter 43.71 RCW or~~
19 ~~in the private insurance market, and who makes application to the pool~~
20 ~~for coverage prior to December 31, 2016;~~

21 ~~(ii) Any resident of the state not eligible for medicare coverage,~~
22 ~~enrolled in the pool prior to December 31, 2013, shall remain eligible~~
23 ~~for pool coverage except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this~~
24 ~~section through December 31, 2016;~~

25 ~~((+iv+)) (iii) Any person becoming eligible for medicare before~~
26 ~~August 1, 2009, who provides evidence of (A) a rejection for medical~~
27 ~~reasons, (B) a requirement of restrictive riders, (C) an up-rated~~
28 ~~premium, (D) a preexisting conditions limitation, or (E) lack of access~~
29 ~~to or for a comprehensive medicare supplemental insurance policy under~~
30 ~~chapter 48.66 RCW, the effect of any of which is to substantially~~
31 ~~reduce coverage from that received by a person considered a standard~~
32 ~~risk by at least one member within six months of the date of~~
33 ~~application; and~~

34 ~~((+v+)) (iv) Any person becoming eligible for medicare on or after~~
35 ~~August 1, 2009, who does not have access to a reasonable choice of~~
36 ~~comprehensive medicare part C plans, as defined in (b) of this~~
37 ~~subsection, and who provides evidence of (A) a rejection for medical~~
38 ~~reasons, (B) a requirement of restrictive riders, (C) an up-rated~~

1 premium, (D) a preexisting conditions limitation, or (E) lack of access
2 to or for a comprehensive medicare supplemental insurance policy under
3 chapter 48.66 RCW, the effect of any of which is to substantially
4 reduce coverage from that received by a person considered a standard
5 risk by at least one member within six months of the date of
6 application(~~(+and~~

7 ~~(vi) Any person under the age of nineteen who does not have access~~
8 ~~to individual plan open enrollment or special enrollment, as defined in~~
9 ~~RCW 48.43.005, or the federal preexisting condition insurance pool, at~~
10 ~~the time of application to the pool is eligible for the pool~~
11 ~~coverage)).~~

12 (b) For purposes of (a)(~~(+v+))~~(iv) of this subsection (1), a person
13 does not have access to a reasonable choice of plans unless the person
14 has a choice of health maintenance organization or preferred provider
15 organization medicare part C plans offered by at least three different
16 carriers that have had provider networks in the person's county of
17 residence for at least five years. The plan options must include
18 coverage at least as comprehensive as a plan F medicare supplement plan
19 combined with medicare parts A and B. The plan options must also
20 provide access to adequate and stable provider networks that make up-
21 to-date provider directories easily accessible on the carrier web site,
22 and will provide them in hard copy, if requested. In addition, if no
23 health maintenance organization or preferred provider organization plan
24 includes the health care provider with whom the person has an
25 established care relationship and from whom he or she has received
26 treatment within the past twelve months, the person does not have
27 reasonable access.

28 (2) The following persons are not eligible for coverage by the
29 pool:

30 (a) Any person having terminated coverage in the pool unless (i)
31 twelve months have lapsed since termination, or (ii) that person can
32 show continuous other coverage which has been involuntarily terminated
33 for any reason other than nonpayment of premiums. However, these
34 exclusions do not apply to eligible individuals as defined in section
35 2741(b) of the federal health insurance portability and accountability
36 act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 300gg-41(b));

37 (b) Inmates of public institutions and those persons who become
38 eligible for medical assistance after June 30, 2008, as defined in RCW

1 74.09.010. However, these exclusions do not apply to eligible
2 individuals as defined in section 2741(b) of the federal health
3 insurance portability and accountability act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Sec.
4 300gg-41(b))(~~(+~~

5 ~~(c) Any person who resides in a county of the state where any~~
6 ~~carrier or insurer regulated under chapter 48.15 RCW offers to the~~
7 ~~public an individual health benefit plan other than a catastrophic~~
8 ~~health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005 at the time of application to~~
9 ~~the pool and who does not qualify for pool coverage based upon the~~
10 ~~results of the standard health questionnaire, or pursuant to subsection~~
11 ~~(1)(a)(iv) of this section)).~~

12 (3) When a carrier or insurer regulated under chapter 48.15 RCW
13 begins to offer an individual health benefit plan in a county where no
14 carrier had been offering an individual health benefit plan:

15 (a) If the health benefit plan offered is other than a catastrophic
16 health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005, any person enrolled in a pool
17 plan pursuant to subsection (1)(a)(~~(iii)~~) (i) of this section in that
18 county shall no longer be eligible for coverage under that plan
19 pursuant to subsection (1)(a)(~~(iii)~~) (i) of this section(~~(, but may~~
20 ~~continue to be eligible for pool coverage based upon the results of the~~
21 ~~standard health questionnaire designated by the board and administered~~
22 ~~by the pool administrator. The pool administrator shall offer to~~
23 ~~administer the questionnaire to each person no longer eligible for~~
24 ~~coverage under subsection (1)(a)(iii) of this section within thirty~~
25 ~~days of determining that he or she is no longer eligible;~~

26 ~~(b) Losing eligibility for pool coverage under this subsection (3)~~
27 ~~does not affect a person's eligibility for pool coverage under~~
28 ~~subsection (1)(a)(i), (ii), or (iv) of this section)); and~~

29 ~~((+e))~~ (b) The pool administrator shall provide written notice to
30 any person who is no longer eligible for coverage under a pool plan
31 under this subsection (3) within thirty days of the administrator's
32 determination that the person is no longer eligible. The notice shall:
33 (i) Indicate that coverage under the plan will cease ninety days from
34 the date that the notice is dated; (ii) describe any other coverage
35 options, either in or outside of the pool, available to the person; and
36 (iii) describe the ~~((procedures for the administration of the standard~~
37 ~~health questionnaire to determine the person's continued eligibility~~

1 ~~for coverage under subsection (1)(a)(ii) of this section; and (iv)~~
2 ~~describe the))~~ enrollment process for the available options outside of
3 the pool.

4 ~~((4) The board shall ensure that an independent analysis of the~~
5 ~~eligibility standards for the pool coverage is conducted, including~~
6 ~~examining the eight percent eligibility threshold, eligibility for~~
7 ~~medicaid enrollees and other publicly sponsored enrollees, and the~~
8 ~~impacts on the pool and the state budget. The board shall report the~~
9 ~~findings to the legislature by December 1, 2007.))~~

10 **Sec. 4.** RCW 48.41.160 and 2007 c 259 s 27 are each amended to read
11 as follows:

12 (1) On or before December 31, 2007, the pool shall cancel all
13 existing pool policies and replace them with policies that are
14 identical to the existing policies except for the inclusion of a
15 provision providing for a guarantee of the continuity of coverage
16 consistent with this section. As a means to minimize the number of
17 policy changes for enrollees, replacement policies provided under this
18 subsection also may include the plan modifications authorized in RCW
19 48.41.100, 48.41.110, and 48.41.120.

20 (2) A pool policy shall contain a guarantee of the individual's
21 right to continued coverage, subject to the provisions of subsections
22 (4) ~~(and)~~, (5), (7), and (8) of this section.

23 (3) The guarantee of continuity of coverage required by this
24 section shall not prevent the pool from canceling or nonrenewing a
25 policy for:

26 (a) Nonpayment of premium;

27 (b) Violation of published policies of the pool;

28 (c) Failure of a covered person who becomes eligible for medicare
29 benefits by reason of age to apply for a pool medical supplement plan,
30 or a medicare supplement plan or other similar plan offered by a
31 carrier pursuant to federal laws and regulations;

32 (d) Failure of a covered person to pay any deductible or copayment
33 amount owed to the pool and not the provider of health care services;

34 (e) Covered persons committing fraudulent acts as to the pool;

35 (f) Covered persons materially breaching the pool policy; or

36 (g) Changes adopted to federal or state laws when such changes no
37 longer permit the continued offering of such coverage.

1 (4)(a) The guarantee of continuity of coverage provided by this
2 section requires that if the pool replaces a plan, it must make the
3 replacement plan available to all individuals in the plan being
4 replaced. The replacement plan must include all of the services
5 covered under the replaced plan, and must not significantly limit
6 access to the kind of services covered under the replacement plan
7 through unreasonable cost-sharing requirements or otherwise. The pool
8 may also allow individuals who are covered by a plan that is being
9 replaced an unrestricted right to transfer to a fully comparable plan.

10 (b) The guarantee of continuity of coverage provided by this
11 section requires that if the pool discontinues offering a plan: (i)
12 The pool must provide notice to each individual of the discontinuation
13 at least ninety days prior to the date of the discontinuation; (ii) the
14 pool must offer to each individual provided coverage under the
15 discontinued plan the option to enroll in any other plan currently
16 offered by the pool for which the individual is otherwise eligible; and
17 (iii) in exercising the option to discontinue a plan and in offering
18 the option of coverage under (b)(ii) of this subsection, the pool must
19 act uniformly without regard to any health status-related factor of
20 enrolled individuals or individuals who may become eligible for this
21 coverage.

22 (c) The pool cannot replace or discontinue a plan under this
23 subsection (4) until it has completed an evaluation of the impact of
24 replacing the plan upon:

- 25 (i) The cost and quality of care to pool enrollees;
- 26 (ii) Pool financing and enrollment;
- 27 (iii) The board's ability to offer comprehensive and other plans to
28 its enrollees;
- 29 (iv) Other items identified by the board.

30 In its evaluation, the board must request input from the
31 constituents represented by the board members.

32 (d) The guarantee of continuity of coverage provided by this
33 section does not apply if the pool has zero enrollment in a plan.

34 (5) The pool may not change the rates for pool policies except on
35 a class basis, with a clear disclosure in the policy of the pool's
36 right to do so.

37 (6) A pool policy offered under this chapter shall provide that,
38 upon the death of the individual in whose name the policy is issued,

1 every other individual then covered under the policy may elect, within
2 a period specified in the policy, to continue coverage under the same
3 or a different policy.

4 (7) All pool policies issued on or after January 1, 2014, must
5 reflect the new eligibility requirements of RCW 48.41.100 and contain
6 a statement of the intent to discontinue the pool coverage on December
7 31, 2016, under pool nonmedicare plans.

8 (8) Pool policies issued prior to January 1, 2014, shall be
9 modified effective January 1, 2013, consistent with subsection (3)(g)
10 of this section, and contain a statement of the intent to discontinue
11 pool coverage on December 31, 2016, under pool nonmedicare plans.

12 (9) The pool shall discontinue all nonmedicare pool plans effective
13 December 31, 2016.

14 NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 44.28 RCW
15 to read as follows:

16 The joint legislative audit and review committee shall complete a
17 review of chapter 48.41 RCW and provide recommendations to the
18 legislature on the continuation of the Washington state health
19 insurance pool with limited eligibility remaining after December 31,
20 2016. The recommendations shall be submitted to the legislature by
21 December 31, 2018, and shall include specific focus on the eligibility
22 for populations that may not have access to comprehensive coverage,
23 suggestions for financing changes if the pool is recommended to
24 continue, and recommendations on a future sunset of the act.

25 NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. Sections 2 and 3 of this act take effect
26 January 1, 2014.

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