
**Labor & Workplace Standards
Committee**

HB 2591

Brief Description: Concerning hearing instrument replacement under the industrial insurance medical aid benefit.

Sponsors: Representatives McBride, Harris, Blake, Vick, Sells, Smith, Ryu, Wylie, Ortiz-Self, Stanford, Pollet, Doglio, Haler, Kloba, Goodman, Steele, Robinson and Stonier.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires replacement of hearing instruments for injured workers at least once every five years.

Hearing Date: 1/15/18

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

Under the state's industrial insurance laws, employers must insure through the State Fund administered by the Department of Labor and Industries (Department) or may self-insure if qualified. Workers who, in the course of employment, are injured or disabled from an occupational disease are entitled to benefits, including proper and necessary medical care. Occupational disease includes hearing loss and hearing aids that are medically necessary are covered. Under the Department's payment policies, no automatic replacement period is established for hearing aids. In general, the State Fund or the self-insurer must pay for the repair of hearing aids and replacement of hearing aids when they are not repairable due to normal wear and tear.

Summary of Bill:

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.

Health services available to an injured worker who receives a hearing instrument must include replacement of the instrument with a new, non-refurbished instrument at least once every five years. The services also include related services necessary to assess, select, and fit the hearing instrument.

A hearing instrument is any wearable prosthetic instrument or device for aiding, improving, compensating for, or correcting defective human hearing and any parts, attachments, or accessories, excluding batteries and cords, ear molds, and assistive listening devices.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2018.

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