

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5507

As of February 14, 2025

Title: An act relating to providing coverage for massage therapy under medical assistance plans.

Brief Description: Providing coverage for massage therapy under medical assistance plans.

Sponsors: Senators Cleveland, Hasegawa, Saldaña and Valdez.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/14/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Health Care Authority to cover massage therapy as a non-pharmacological alternative for treating or managing pain upon referral from a qualified health care provider beginning January 1, 2027.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Julie Tran (786-7283)

Background: Medicaid is a federal-state partnership with programs established in the federal Social Security Act and implemented at the state level with federal matching funds. The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers the Medicaid Program for health care for low-income state residents who meet certain eligibility criteria. Washington's Medicaid Program, known as Apple Health, offers a complete medical benefits package, including prescription drug coverage, to eligible families, children under age 19, low-income adults, certain disabled individuals, and pregnant women.

Summary of Bill: HCA must provide Medicaid coverage for massage therapy performed by a licensed massage therapist when medically necessary as a non-pharmacological alternative for pain treatment or pain management and with a referral from an authorized provider to order or refer items or service beginning January 1, 2027.

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Opioid use for pain management is still a problem. This bill considers an alternative to opioid usage for pain and makes it available for patients. The bill ensures equitable access for low-income patients and it fills a needed gap in the state. Medicaid has expanded coverage to chiropractic visits and acupuncture care. Massage therapy services should also be included as it will help lower the overall cost to the state and it will help reduce hospital admissions and lower emergency room costs and visits.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Annette Cleveland, Prime Sponsor; Leslie Emerick, American Massage Therapy Association WA Chapter (AMTA-WA); Julie Onofrio, American Massage Therapy Association - WA; Christine Hooper, AMTA; Kathryn Lewandowsky, Whole Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.