
HOUSE BILL 2555

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Lekanoff, Callan, Santos, Ryu, Davis, Parshley, Ramel, Doglio, Stearns, Obras, Macri, Pollet, and Zahn

Read first time 01/19/26. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to medicaid coverage for traditional health care
2 practices; reenacting and amending RCW 43.71B.010; and adding a new
3 section to chapter 43.71B RCW.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.71B.010 and 2020 c 256 s 102 are each reenacted
6 and amended to read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
8 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

9 (1) "Advisory council" means the governor's Indian health
10 advisory council established in RCW 43.71B.020.

11 (2) "Advisory plan" means the plan described in RCW 43.71B.030.

12 (3) "American Indian" or "Alaska Native" means any individual who
13 is: (a) A member of a federally recognized tribe; or (b) eligible for
14 the Indian health service.

15 (4) "Authority" means the health care authority.

16 (5) "Board" means the northwest Portland area Indian health
17 board, an Oregon nonprofit corporation wholly controlled by the
18 tribes in the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

19 (6) "Commission" means the American Indian health commission for
20 Washington state, a Washington nonprofit corporation wholly
21 controlled by the tribes and urban Indian organizations in the state.

1 (7) "Community health aide" means a tribal community health
2 provider certified by a community health aide program of the Indian
3 health service or one or more tribes or tribal organizations
4 consistent with the provisions of 25 U.S.C. Sec. 16161, who can
5 perform a wide range of duties within the provider's scope of
6 certified practice in health programs of a tribe, tribal
7 organization, Indian health service facility, or urban Indian
8 organization to improve access to culturally appropriate, quality
9 care for American Indians and Alaska Natives and their families and
10 communities, including but not limited to community health aides,
11 community health practitioners, behavioral health aides, behavioral
12 health practitioners, dental health aides, and dental health aide
13 therapists.

14 (8) "Community health aide program" means a community health aide
15 certification board for the state consistent with 25 U.S.C. Sec.
16 16161 and the training programs and certification requirements
17 established thereunder.

18 (9) "Fee-for-service" means the state's medicaid program for
19 which payments are made under the state plan, without a managed care
20 entity, in accordance with the fee-for-service payment methodology.

21 (10) "Historical trauma" means situations where a community
22 experienced traumatic events, the events generated high levels of
23 collective distress, and the events were perpetuated by outsiders
24 with a destructive or genocidal intent.

25 (11) "Indian health care provider" means a health care program
26 operated by the Indian health service or by a tribe, tribal
27 organization, or urban Indian organization as those terms are defined
28 in 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1603.

29 (12) "Indian health service" means the federal agency within the
30 United States department of health and human services.

31 (13) "New state savings" means the savings to the state general
32 fund that are achieved as a result of the centers for medicare and
33 medicaid services state health official letter 16-002 and related
34 guidance, calculated as the difference between (a) medicaid payments
35 received from the centers for medicare and medicaid services based on
36 the one hundred percent federal medical assistance percentage; and
37 (b) medicaid payments received from the centers for medicare and
38 medicaid services based on the federal medical assistance percentage
39 that would apply in the absence of state health official letter
40 16-002 and related guidance.

1 (14) "Reinvestment account" means the Indian health improvement
2 reinvestment account created in RCW 43.71B.040.

3 (15) "Reinvestment committee" means the Indian health improvement
4 reinvestment committee established in RCW 43.71B.020(4).

5 (16) "Traditional health care practices" means the sum total of
6 the knowledge, skill, and practices based on the theories, beliefs,
7 and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable
8 or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the
9 prevention, diagnosis, improvement, or treatment of physical and
10 mental illness.

11 (17) "Tribal organization" has the meaning set forth in 25 U.S.C.
12 Sec. 5304.

13 (~~(17)~~) (18) "Tribally operated facility" means a health care
14 facility operated by one or more tribes or tribal organizations to
15 provide specialty services, including but not limited to evaluation
16 and treatment services, secure detox services, inpatient psychiatric
17 services, nursing home services, and residential substance use
18 disorder services.

19 (~~(18)~~) (19) "Tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or
20 other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native
21 village or group or regional or village corporation as defined in or
22 established pursuant to the Alaska Native claims settlement act (43
23 U.S.C. Sec. 1601 et seq.) which is recognized as eligible for the
24 special programs and services provided by the United States to
25 Indians because of their status as Indians.

26 (~~(19)~~) (20) "Urban Indian" means any individual who resides in
27 an urban center and is: (a) A member of a tribe terminated since 1940
28 and those tribes recognized now or in the future by the state in
29 which they reside, or who is a descendant, in the first or second
30 degree, of any such member; (b) an Eskimo or Aleut or other Alaska
31 Native; (c) considered by the secretary of the interior to be an
32 Indian for any purpose; or (d) considered by the United States
33 secretary of health and human services to be an Indian for purposes
34 of eligibility for Indian health services, including as a California
35 Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, or other Alaska Native.

36 (~~(20)~~) (21) "Urban Indian organization" means an urban Indian
37 organization, as defined by 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1603.

38 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.71B
39 RCW to read as follows:

1 The authority shall apply, no later than July 1, 2026, for a
2 waiver from the centers for medicare and medicaid services under
3 section 1115(a) of the social security act to provide expenditure
4 authority for coverage of traditional health care practices. Upon
5 approval from the centers for medicare and medicaid services, the
6 authority shall provide coverage, in accordance with centers for
7 medicare and medicaid services requirements, for traditional health
8 care practices received through Indian health service facilities or
9 facilities operated by tribes under the Indian self-determination and
10 education assistance act or facilities operated by urban Indian
11 organizations under Title V of the Indian health care improvement
12 act. Coverage of these traditional health care practices must be
13 available to medicaid beneficiaries who are able to receive services
14 delivered by or through these facilities.

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