

**RCW 48.21.220 Home health care, hospice care, optional coverage required—Standards, limitations, restrictions—Rules—Medicare supplemental contracts excluded.**

(1) Every insurer entering into or renewing group or blanket disability insurance policies governed by this chapter shall offer optional coverage for home health care and hospice care for persons who are homebound and would otherwise require hospitalization. Such optional coverage need only be offered in conjunction with a policy that provides payment for hospitalization as a part of health care coverage. Persons seeking such services for palliative care in conjunction with treatment or management of serious or life-threatening illness need not be homebound in order to be eligible for coverage under this section.

(2) Home health care and hospice care coverage offered under subsection (1) of this section shall conform to the following standards, limitations, and restrictions in addition to those set forth in chapter 70.126 RCW:

(a) The coverage may include reasonable deductibles, coinsurance provisions, and internal maximums;

(b) The coverage should be structured to create incentives for the use of home health care and hospice care as an alternative to hospitalization;

(c) The coverage may contain provisions for utilization review and quality assurance;

(d) The coverage may require that home health agencies and hospices have written treatment plans approved by a physician licensed under chapter 18.57 or 18.71 RCW, and may require such treatment plans to be reviewed at designated intervals;

(e) The coverage shall provide benefits for, and restrict benefits to, services rendered by home health and hospice agencies licensed by the department of social and health services;

(f) Hospice care coverage shall provide benefits for terminally ill patients for an initial period of care of not less than six months and may provide benefits for an additional six months of care in cases where the patient is facing imminent death or is entering remission if certified in writing by the attending physician;

(g) Home health care coverage shall provide benefits for a minimum of one hundred thirty health care visits per calendar year. However, a visit of any duration by an employee of a home health agency for the purpose of providing services under the plan of treatment constitutes one visit;

(h) The coverage may be structured so that services or supplies included in the primary contract are not duplicated in the optional home health and hospice coverage.

(3) The insurance commissioner shall adopt any rules necessary to implement this section.

(4) The requirements of this section shall not apply to contracts or policies governed by chapter 48.66 RCW.

(5) An insurer, as a condition of reimbursement, may require compliance with home health and hospice certification regulations established by the United States department of health and human services. [2015 c 22 § 1; 1988 c 245 § 31; 1984 c 22 § 1; 1983 c 249 § 1.]

**Application—2015 c 22:** "This act applies to plans issued or renewed after December 31, 2016." [2015 c 22 § 4.]

**Effective date—1984 c 22:** "This act shall take effect July 1, 1984." [1984 c 22 § 8.]

**Effective date—1983 c 249:** See note following RCW 70.126.001.  
*Home health care, hospice care, rules: Chapter 70.126 RCW.*