

RCW 48.41.100 Eligibility for coverage. (1)(a) The following persons who are residents of this state are eligible for pool coverage:

(i) Any resident of the state not eligible for medicare coverage or medicaid coverage, and residing in a county where an individual health plan other than a catastrophic health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005 is not offered to the resident during defined open enrollment or special enrollment periods at the time of application to the pool, whether through the health benefit exchange operated pursuant to chapter 43.71 RCW or in the private insurance market;

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

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

(iv) Any person becoming eligible for medicare on or after August 1, 2009, who does not have access to a reasonable choice of comprehensive medicare part C plans, as defined in (b) of this subsection, and who provides evidence of (A) a rejection for medical reasons, (B) a requirement of restrictive riders, (C) an up-rated premium, (D) a preexisting conditions limitation, or (E) lack of access to or for a comprehensive medicare supplemental insurance policy under chapter 48.66 RCW, the effect of any of which is to substantially reduce coverage from that received by a person considered a standard risk by at least one member within six months of the date of application.

(b) For purposes of (a)(i) of this subsection, by December 1, 2013, the board shall develop and implement a process to determine an applicant's eligibility based on the criteria specified in (a)(i) of this subsection.

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

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

(a) Any person having terminated coverage in the pool unless (i) twelve months have lapsed since termination, or (ii) that person can

show continuous other coverage which has been involuntarily terminated for any reason other than nonpayment of premiums. However, these exclusions do not apply to eligible individuals as defined in section 2741(b) of the federal health insurance portability and accountability act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 300gg-41(b));

(b) Inmates of public institutions and those persons who become eligible for medical assistance after June 30, 2008, as defined in RCW 74.09.010. However, these exclusions do not apply to eligible individuals as defined in section 2741(b) of the federal health insurance portability and accountability act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 300gg-41(b)).

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

(a) If the health benefit plan offered is other than a catastrophic health plan as defined in RCW 48.43.005, any person enrolled in a pool plan pursuant to subsection (1)(a)(i) of this section in that county shall no longer be eligible for coverage under that plan pursuant to subsection (1)(a)(i) of this section; and

(b) The pool administrator shall provide written notice to any person who is no longer eligible for coverage under a pool plan under this subsection (3) within thirty days of the administrator's determination that the person is no longer eligible. The notice shall:

(i) Indicate that coverage under the plan will cease ninety days from the date that the notice is dated; (ii) describe any other coverage options, either in or outside of the pool, available to the person; and (iii) describe the enrollment process for the available options outside of the pool. [2021 c 60 § 1; 2017 c 110 § 2; 2013 c 279 § 3. Prior: 2011 c 315 § 5; 2011 c 314 § 15; 2009 c 555 § 3; 2007 c 259 § 30; 2001 c 196 § 3; 2000 c 79 § 12; 1995 c 34 § 5; 1989 c 121 § 7; 1987 c 431 § 10.]

Findings—Intent—2017 c 110: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The Washington state health insurance pool currently provides subsidized health coverage to almost one thousand five hundred people in medicare supplemental plans and nonmedicare health plans;

(b) Enrollees in Washington state health insurance pool plans tend to have higher health care costs than enrollees in other types of health plans;

(c) Having a separate insurance pool for high-risk individuals benefits all purchasers of health insurance products by keeping premium costs down;

(d) The costs of subsidizing Washington state health insurance pool enrollees are borne disproportionately by purchasers of small group and individual market plans;

(e) The Washington state health insurance pool is scheduled to close its nonmedicare enrollment after December 31, 2017; and

(f) Uncertainty due to changes to the health care marketplace on the federal and state levels increases the necessity of keeping the Washington state health insurance pool open, at least in the short term.

(2) The legislature therefore intends to:

(a) Extend the expiration date for nonmedicare coverage in the Washington state health insurance pool; and

(b) Study:

(i) The necessity of continuing Washington state health insurance pool coverage in the short and long terms;
(ii) The role of the Washington state health insurance pool in light of the evolving health care landscape; and
(iii) The creation of a funding mechanism that equitably and broadly apportions Washington state health insurance pool costs across Washington's health care marketplace." [2017 c 110 § 1.]

Effective date—2013 c 279 §§ 2 and 3: See note following RCW 48.41.060.

Finding—Intent—2013 c 279: See note following RCW 48.41.060.

Effective date—2011 c 315 §§ 5 and 6: "Sections 5 and 6 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately [May 11, 2011]." [2011 c 315 § 7.]

Intent—2011 c 315: See note following RCW 48.43.005.

Contingent effective date—2009 c 555 § 3: "Section 3 of this act takes effect if section 4, chapter 317, Laws of 2008 is null and void on July 26, 2009; otherwise section 3 of this act is null and void." [2009 c 555 § 6.]

Effective date—2007 c 259 § 30: "Section 30 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 2, 2007]." [2007 c 259 § 75.]

Subheadings not law—2007 c 259: See note following RCW 7.70.060.

Effective date—2001 c 196: See note following RCW 48.20.025.

Effective date—Severability—2000 c 79: See notes following RCW 48.04.010.