
SENATE BILL 6468

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1996 Regular Session

By Senators Spanel, Quigley, Wojahn, Moyer, Franklin and Deccio

Read first time 01/15/96. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to coverage for cranial hair prostheses for
2 alopecia; adding a new section to chapter 41.05 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 48.20 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.21
4 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.44 RCW; adding a new section to
5 chapter 48.46 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds the following:

8 (a) Alopecia areata and its variants, alopecia totalis and alopecia
9 universalis, are common, noncontagious diseases that affect an
10 estimated two million Americans. They are diseases of the hair
11 follicle with results ranging from large patches of baldness to the
12 total loss of all body hair. This hair loss can be acute and short-
13 lived, occurring in just days or weeks, or chronic with years of
14 regrowth in some sites and progression to new sites.

15 (b) Alopecia areata and its variants are associated with an
16 alteration in the immunological system, but their cause is unknown.

17 (c) Treatments for alopecia areata, totalis, and universalis using
18 immunomodulating agents can stimulate new hair growth, but none prevent
19 new patches from developing. These treatments must be continued to

1 maintain their effect, but treatment for alopecia areata may stop when
2 the disease goes into spontaneous remission. There are concerns
3 surrounding the long-term use and side effects of some of the
4 treatments.

5 (d) Patients with alopecia areata, totalis, and universalis may
6 suffer a profound alteration in their functional status, particularly
7 women and children. There are documented cases of adults who have lost
8 their jobs, have been harassed, and have been accused of belonging to
9 extremist cults because of their appearance due to hair loss. Children
10 with alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis have been removed from
11 mainstream classes and placed in special education classes and
12 ostracized by their peers.

13 (e) Alopecia areata, totalis, and universalis are recognized
14 medical disease processes, which cause severe hair loss that can alter
15 a patient's functional status. The use of cranial hair prostheses
16 returns patients to their previous functional status.

17 (2) It is the intent of the legislature to clarify that policies
18 that provide benefits for prostheses must provide benefits for cranial
19 hair prostheses for alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 41.05 RCW
21 to read as follows:

22 All state-purchased health care that provides coverage for
23 prostheses shall include coverage for cranial hair prostheses for
24 patients suffering from alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis, to
25 the extent that benefits are provided for alopecia areata, totalis, or
26 universalis.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 48.20 RCW
28 to read as follows:

29 An insurer that offers to any individual a health benefit plan that
30 provides coverage for prostheses shall include coverage for cranial
31 hair prostheses for patients suffering from alopecia areata, totalis,
32 or universalis, to the extent that benefits are provided for alopecia
33 areata, totalis, or universalis.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 48.21 RCW
35 to read as follows:

1 A group insurance contract or blanket disability insurance contract
2 that provides coverage for prostheses shall include coverage for
3 cranial hair prostheses for patients suffering from alopecia areata,
4 totalis, or universalis, to the extent that benefits are provided for
5 alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 48.44 RCW
7 to read as follows:

8 A health service contractor that provides coverage for prostheses
9 shall include coverage for cranial hair prostheses for patients
10 suffering from alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis, to the extent
11 that benefits are provided for alopecia areata, totalis, or
12 universalis.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 48.46 RCW
14 to read as follows:

15 A health maintenance organization that provides coverage for
16 prostheses shall include coverage for cranial hair prostheses for
17 patients suffering from alopecia areata, totalis, or universalis, to
18 the extent that benefits are provided for alopecia areata, totalis, or
19 universalis.

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