
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2128

Brief Description: Concerning health care coverage for children.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Delays the availability of children's health insurance for children in families with household income over 300% of the federal poverty level until January 1, 2010.
- Provides for express lane eligibility for children's health coverage by July 1, 2010.
- Directs the Department of Social and Health Services to improve outreach, enrollment, and renewal efforts.

Hearing Date: 2/17/09

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146)

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to provide affordable health coverage for all children living in Washington whose family income is at or below 250% of the federal poverty level (\$53,000 for a family of four). If the Legislature appropriates sufficient funds, the financial eligibility for the program will increase to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$63,600 for a family of four). For children living in families with household income above 300% of the federal poverty level, the DSHS is required to offer nonsubsidized health coverage for children beginning on January 1, 2009. The DSHS is also required to offer nonsubsidized health care coverage through the same children's health programs available to children living in families with household incomes below 300% of the federal poverty level.

Summary of Bill:

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

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) is required to:

1. implement express lane eligibility for children's health coverage by July 1, 2010;
2. modify outreach, application, and renewal procedures to increase enrollment and enrollment rates, and renewals and renewal rates;
3. use an eligibility card that identifies a child as a participant in the Apple Health for Kids Program; and
4. develop performance measures that show children in the program are receiving health care from a medical home and whether the overall health of enrolled children is improving.

After January 1, 2010, the Department will offer families whose household income exceeds 300% of the federal poverty level the ability to purchase health insurance for their children without an explicit premium subsidy from the state. The benefit design of the health insurance will be different from the package available to children living in families with household incomes below 300% of the federal poverty level.

The position of Apple Health for Kids Program Director is created in the Department. The position will report directly to the Secretary of the Department.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested 2-16-09.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.