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**SENATE BILL 6685**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Das, Kuderer, Darneille, Saldaña, Wilson, C., Lovelett, Nguyen, and Billig

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring health insurance coverage for an  
2 annual mental wellness examination performed by a qualified mental  
3 health care provider; adding a new section to chapter 48.43 RCW; and  
4 creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and determines that:

7 (1) Prevention and early identification of mental health issues  
8 can lead to better outcomes for families and all people throughout  
9 their lives;

10 (2) Mental health conditions that occur in youth before the age  
11 of six can interfere with emotional, cognitive, and physical  
12 development;

13 (3) The number of aging adults who have a mental health condition  
14 is expected to double to fifteen million in the next two decades,  
15 leading to increased health care use and higher health care costs;

16 (4) With an increase in suicide and the number of overdose deaths  
17 on the rise, it is imperative to increase access to preventive annual  
18 mental health wellness examinations;

19 (5) Annual mental health wellness examinations help identify  
20 potential mental health issues early on and allow individuals to be

1 offered services and supports to address their needs before an issue  
2 progresses or becomes a crisis;

3 (6) Primary care providers are important in early detection of  
4 mental health issues but often lack the ability to provide adequate  
5 education, consultation, and treatment options to clients in need of  
6 further mental health support; and

7 (7) Therefore, it is imperative that our system works to  
8 integrate and colocate mental health services in primary care  
9 settings and opens access to annual mental health wellness exams,  
10 starting at the prenatal phase through the end of life.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 48.43  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Health plans issued or renewed after July 1, 2021, shall  
14 provide benefits or coverage for an annual mental health wellness  
15 examination of up to sixty minutes that is performed by a qualified  
16 mental health care provider. The coverage must:

- 17 (a) Be comparable to the coverage of a physical examination;  
18 (b) Comply with the requirements of federal mental health parity  
19 laws; and  
20 (c) Not require any deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance for  
21 the mental health wellness examination.

22 (2) For the purposes of this section:

23 (a) "Mental health wellness examination" means an examination  
24 that includes services such as behavioral health screenings;  
25 education and consultation on healthy lifestyle changes; referrals to  
26 ongoing treatment, mental health services, and other supports; and  
27 discussion of potential options for medication.

28 (b) "Qualified mental health care provider" means:

29 (i) A physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW who has training  
30 in psychiatry or mental health;

31 (ii) A physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW who  
32 has training in psychiatry or mental health;

33 (iii) An advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under  
34 chapter 18.79 RCW who has training in psychiatry or mental health;

35 (iv) A psychologist licensed under chapter 18.83 RCW;

36 (v) A mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, or  
37 clinical social worker licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW; or

1           (vi) A substance use disorder professional or substance use  
2 disorder professional trainee under chapter 18.205 RCW.

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