
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that vision is an
2 important aspect of an individual's overall health and if
3 damaged can affect an individual's livelihood. Without a good
4 sense of vision, an individual is less likely to secure
5 employment, pay bills, and be a functional member of society,
6 which may increase the burden of costs to the State to support
7 this individual.

8 The legislature has historically recognized the importance
9 of making medicaid coverage available for the State's most
10 vulnerable populations and has acted to ensure that health care
11 payments made with state funds or controlled by the State are
12 sufficient to cover the actual costs of the care provided.

13 The legislature also finds that the department of human
14 services' budget was reduced by \$150,000,000 forcing it to
15 prioritize its services and programs based on the severity of
16 issues it addresses. Due to budget cuts, the department of
17 human services has requested to drop vision services for able-
18 bodied adults insured by medicaid. The loss of this benefit



1 will adversely impact those insured by QUEST, eye care
2 providers, local nonprofits that provide vision services,
3 community health centers, and ultimately the State's budget.

4 The legislature further finds that although some may deem
5 the ability to see as a quality of life issue rather than one of
6 mortality or morbidity, advanced eye disease can cause partial
7 to complete blindness, dramatically increasing levels of
8 morbidity. Additionally, many argue that change in vision and
9 eye diseases, such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts,
10 and other diseases, are primary indicators of diseases with high
11 mortality rates. One study found that retinopathy in people
12 without diabetes may signal increased risk of coronary heart
13 disease. This finding is important because increased coronary
14 heart disease mortality associated with retinopathy in people
15 without diabetes was equivalent to the presence of diabetes
16 itself, which is the seventh leading cause of death in the
17 United States and a major cause of heart disease and stroke, and
18 retinopathy can easily be detected and addressed in its early
19 stages with regular eye examinations. Therefore, early
20 detection of eye disease through testing refraction can
21 potentially minimize the risk of having a disease with high



1 mortality rates and the future costs of treatment associated
2 with these diseases.

3 The legislature also finds that from a provider standpoint,
4 accepting medicaid insurance is already an arguable sacrifice.
5 Medicaid reimburses less, is hard to bill, requires
6 significantly more bureaucracy to manage, and therefore costs
7 more to accept. Additionally, there currently exists a
8 tremendous access-to-care issue for medicaid recipients seeking
9 vision services. By cutting medicaid adult vision services
10 benefits, providers are further dissuaded to accept this
11 benefit, further broadening the gaps of access to care,
12 particularly on the neighbor islands.

13 The legislature further finds that the federal government
14 has agreed to match state appropriations for medicaid adult
15 vision services.

16 The purpose of this Act is to match federal funding
17 dedicated to the State to restore medicaid adult vision
18 services.

19 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
21 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to match



1 the federal medicaid allowance allocated to the State for adult
2 vision services.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
4 human services for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012.



Report Title:

Kupuna Caucus; Medicaid; Adult Vision Services; DHS;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the department of human services to match federal funds allocated to the State for medicaid benefits dedicated to adult vision services. (SD1)

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