

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MEDICAID.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that access to quality
2 health care that is accessible, affordable, and equitable is of
3 paramount importance to public health and wellness. The
4 legislature finds however, that presently, approximately five
5 hundred pregnant persons and four thousand income-qualified
6 children in the state are denied access to affordable health
7 care through medicaid, the children's health insurance program,
8 and health insurance exchanges established under the Patient
9 Protection and Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, solely
10 due to their immigration status. Furthermore, evidence-based
11 studies determined that low-income immigrants without prenatal
12 care are seven times more likely to give birth prematurely and
13 five times more likely to experience neonatal death,
14 demonstrating that limited access to health care for pregnant
15 persons and their newborn children significantly increases risk
16 of exposure to life-threatening situations.



1 The legislature further finds that as of 2024, twenty-two
2 states plus the District of Columbia provide medicaid coverage
3 to all income-qualified pregnant residents regardless of their
4 immigrant status. For Hawaii, with the current cost of an
5 average neonatal intensive care unit stay being between \$7,000
6 and \$8,000 per day, the department of human services estimates
7 the cost of providing income-qualified pregnant persons with
8 health insurance coverage and twelve months of post-partum care
9 at \$1,364,000 annually. Providing greater access to health
10 insurance coverage for income-qualified pregnant persons will
11 help lower barriers and increase access to health care for
12 resident immigrant populations in the State.

13 Similarly, low-income immigrant children without access to
14 health care services experience a higher rate of preventable
15 hospitalizations during childhood. Without appropriate medical
16 management, chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes may
17 lead to life-threatening medical emergencies. Additionally,
18 inadequate access to preventative care such as immunizations and
19 well-being and well-child visits may aggravate various health
20 conditions increasing the occurrence of acute and chronic



1 conditions and can leave developmental health conditions
2 undiagnosed and untreated.

3 The legislature also finds that as of 2024, twelve states
4 and the District of Columbia provide medicaid coverage to
5 income-eligible children regardless of immigration status. As
6 for Hawaii, the department of human services estimates the cost
7 of providing income-qualified children with health insurance
8 coverage under the federal health services initiative program at
9 \$2,976,000, with a wholly funded state program estimated at
10 \$9,600,000. Increasing access to health insurance coverage for
11 income-qualified children will improve health care outcomes for
12 all keiki, regardless of immigration status.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
14 funds to the department of human services to provide medicaid
15 coverage under the children's health insurance program for
16 income-qualified pregnant persons and children who are otherwise
17 ineligible due to their immigration status.

18 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
21 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal



S.B. NO. 714

Report Title:

DHS; Medicaid; Children's Health Insurance Program; Pregnant Persons; Children; Immigration Status; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to provide Medicaid coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program for income-qualified pregnant persons and children who are otherwise ineligible due to their immigration status.

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