
SENATE BILL 5822

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Randall, Frockt, Cleveland, Wilson, C., Salomon, Nguyen, Hasegawa, Keiser, Saldaña, Van De Wege, Liias, and Das

1 AN ACT Relating to providing a pathway to establish a universal
2 health care system for the residents of Washington state; creating
3 new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) Health care is a human right and it is in the public interest
7 that all residents have access to health care that improves health
8 outcomes, contains health care costs for the state and its residents,
9 and reduces health disparities;

10 (b) The legislature intends to control health care costs so that
11 Washington is able to achieve a sustainable health care system with
12 more equitable access to quality health care;

13 (c) H.R. 6097, the state-based universal health care act of 2018
14 was proposed to establish a flexible framework under which states
15 could provide comprehensive universal health coverage to all of their
16 residents;

17 (d) It is prudent for the state to explore mechanisms to operate
18 and fund such a program if H.R. 6097 or similar federal legislation
19 is enacted; and

20 (e) Despite the progress Washington has made since the enactment
21 of the patient protection and affordable care act, not all state

1 residents can access or afford health coverage in the current market.
2 As of 2017, four hundred thousand Washington residents remained
3 uninsured, and a growing number go without care because of growing
4 health care costs.

5 (2) The legislature therefore declares its intent to provide a
6 policy and financial framework for how the state could achieve
7 universal coverage and equitable access and outcomes for all
8 residents in the future, while concurrently evaluating efforts to
9 ensure statewide affordable access and improvements to coverage for
10 all residents in the preceding years through a public option and
11 standardizing benefit plan designs.

12 (3) This section does not create any new entitlement to services
13 or cause of action under this act, and cannot form the basis for a
14 private right of action.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The health care authority shall
16 convene a work group on establishing a universal health care system
17 in Washington. The work group must consist of a broad range of
18 stakeholders with expertise in the health care financing and delivery
19 system, including but not limited to:

- 20 (a) Consumers;
- 21 (b) Large and small businesses with experience with large and
22 small group insurance and self-insured models;
- 23 (c) Labor, including experience with Taft Hartley coverage;
- 24 (d) Health care providers and facilities;
- 25 (e) Health carriers;
- 26 (f) State agencies, including the office of financial management,
27 the office of the insurance commissioner, the department of revenue,
28 and the office of the state treasurer; and
- 29 (g) Legislators from each caucus of the house of representatives
30 and senate.

31 (2) The work group must study and make recommendations to the
32 legislature on a universal health care system that includes publicly
33 funded, privately delivered health care that is sustainable and
34 affordable to all Washington residents including, but not limited to:

- 35 (a) Options for increasing coverage and access for uninsured and
36 underinsured populations;
- 37 (b) Transparency measures across major health system actors,
38 including carriers, hospitals, and other health care facilities,

1 pharmaceutical companies, and provider groups that promote
2 understanding and analyses to best manage and lower costs;

3 (c) Innovations that will promote quality, evidence-based
4 practices leading to sustainability and affordability in a universal
5 health care system. When studying innovations under this subsection,
6 the work group must develop recommendations on issues related to
7 covered benefits and quality assurance and consider expanding and
8 supplementing the work of the Robert Bree collaborative and the
9 health technology assessment program;

10 (d) Options for ensuring a just transition to a universal health
11 care system for all stakeholders including, but not limited to,
12 consumers, businesses, health care providers and facilities,
13 hospitals, health carriers, and state agencies;

14 (e) Options to expand or establish health care purchasing in
15 collaboration with neighboring states; and

16 (f) Options for revenue and financing mechanisms to fund the
17 universal health care system. If funds are appropriated specifically
18 for this purpose, the work group may contract with a consultant to
19 perform any actuarial analysis necessary to develop options under
20 this subsection (2) (f).

21 (3) The work group must report its findings and recommendations
22 to the appropriate committees of the legislature by November 15,
23 2020.

24 (4) This section expires January 1, 2021.

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