

SB 147 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Girod, Sen. Beyer

Senate Committee On Health Care

Action Date: 03/21/17

Action: Do pass and subsequent referral to Ways and Means be rescinded.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Beyer, Knopp, Kruse, Monnes Anderson, Steiner Hayward

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to develop recommendations to create a program to reimburse the costs of oral health care for low-income Compact of Free Association (COFA) residents living in Oregon. Requires DCBS to convene an advisory group in developing recommendations and report the group's recommendations to the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2017. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Lack of dental coverage or access to dental services among COFA residents in Oregon
- U.S. history, military involvement and impacts of nuclear testing in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia
- Existing COFA Premium Assistance Program operated by DCBS

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

After World War II, the U.S. assumed administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In 1986, the island nations under the Trust Territory were given the option of choosing between becoming a U.S. commonwealth or independent nations with special agreements with this country. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia chose independence, and entered a treaty known as "Compact of Free Association" (COFA). The Compact agreements allow citizens from each of these nations to freely migrate, without work permits or visas, to study, live and work in the United States. When the COFA treaty was signed, COFA migrants were eligible for Medicaid and other safety net programs. In 1996, COFA migrants were excluded from Medicaid because of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA).

In 2016, the Oregon Legislative Assembly established the COFA Premium Assistance Program (House Bill 4071). The program provides financial assistance to enable low-income COFA citizens residing in Oregon to purchase health insurance through the federal Marketplace and to pay out-of-pocket costs associated with the coverage. As of February 2017, approximately 290 adults are enrolled in the program. The program does not provide financial assistance with dental coverage, as the Marketplace plans available in the COFA program (along with most other Marketplace health plans) do not include adult dental benefits. Stand-alone dental plans are offered on the Marketplace; however, federal subsidies are not designed to cover them, and usually are inadequate to do so.

Senate Bill 147 requires DCBS to develop recommendations to create a program to reimburse dental coverage for COFA residents in Oregon.