

Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of HB 2986

Concerning Health Care for Pacific Islanders Residing in Washington Under a Compact of Free Association

Evidence indicates that HB 2986 has the potential to increase the number of COFA residents enrolled in a qualified health plan which in turn has the potential to increase access and utilization of health care services, to improve health outcomes, and to decrease health disparities.

BILL INFORMATION

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Moscoso, and Hudgins

Summary of Bill:

- Creates a premium assistance program for low-income COFA islanders to purchase health insurance through the health benefit exchange. COFA islanders are citizens of Compact of Free Association (COFA) islands, which are the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.
- Specifies that individuals are eligible for premium assistance with no out of pocket costs if they are a resident of Washington State, COFA citizens, enroll in a silver qualified health plan, have income less than 133% of the federal poverty level, and are ineligible for Medicaid.
- Requires the creation of a comprehensive community education and outreach campaign.
- Creates an advisory committee to guide in the development, implementation, and operation of the COFA premium assistance program that includes, but is not limited to, insurers and representatives of communities of COFA citizens.

HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

Summary of Findings:

This review assumes that if the Legislature creates a premium assistance program for COFA residents then eligible individuals will enroll in a qualified health plan. This assumption is based on experiences from individuals who are currently working in states where similar assistance programs have been created and their familiarity with their states' education and outreach efforts.

This Health Impact Review found the following evidence regarding the provisions in HB 2986:

- Strong evidence that enrollment in health insurance would improve health outcomes for COFA residents.
- Very strong evidence that enrollment in health insurance would increase access and utilization of health services.
- Very strong evidence that increased access to and utilization of health care services would improve health outcomes for COFA residents.

Strong evidence that improved health outcomes would decrease health disparities by race/ethnicity and income.

FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full Health Impact Review:

<http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2016-06-HB2986.pdf>

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