
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 it is critical to
2 achieve universal health coverage for Hawaii's residents.
3 Hawaii's QUEST program goes a long way toward this goal.
4 However, the program cannot handle all eligible uninsured
5 adults, and a cap has been placed on participation in the QUEST
6 program, thus leaving out tens of thousands of eligible
7 uninsured adults.

8 The current cap prevents many adults, especially
9 non-pregnant women, who are income- and asset-eligible from
10 enrolling in the program. These excluded but eligible adults
11 are at high risk for not getting necessary primary and
12 preventive care, not getting necessary prescription drugs, and
13 are more likely to incur or generate unnecessary emergency room
14 costs because of their uninsured status. Uninsured adults are a
15 financial burden on hospitals, emergency rooms, community health
16 care centers, and others that provide uncompensated care.

17 The legislature further finds that almost fifty-four per
18 cent of the funds needed to cover all eligible adults under the



1 QUEST program can be matched by the federal government. In
2 addition, the cap limit has not been raised even though more
3 children are now eligible due to more liberal eligibility
4 requirements for children implemented in July 2000.

5 The purpose of this Act is to expand enrollment in the
6 State's QUEST program by eliminating the enrollment cap.

7 SECTION 2. **QUEST enrollment.** The department of human
8 services shall submit a request to the Centers for Medicare and
9 Medicaid Services to amend the state waiver to allow the State
10 to remove its QUEST enrollment cap. The department of human
11 services shall not impose any cap on enrollment in the State's
12 QUEST program and shall enroll all otherwise eligible
13 individuals. The director of human services shall adopt rules
14 in accordance with chapter 91 to implement this section.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, for
18 expanding health care coverage by eliminating the cap on
19 enrollment in the State's QUEST program.

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

22 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

SB2507, SD1

Report Title:

QUEST Eligibility; Eliminate Enrollment Cap

Description:

Eliminates cap on enrollment in QUEST program. Directs the Department of Human Services to apply for an amendment of the state waiver from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Appropriates funds. (SD1)

