
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ASSESS THE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL
EFFECTS OF REQUIRING HEALTH INSURERS TO OFFER COVERAGE FOR
HEARING AIDS.

1 WHEREAS, according to the Mayo Clinic, an estimated
2 one-quarter of Americans between the ages of sixty-five and
3 seventy-five and around three-quarters of those older than
4 seventy-five have some degree of hearing loss; and

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6 WHEREAS, further according to the Mayo Clinic, hearing loss
7 is not reversible; and

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9 WHEREAS, according to the American Association of Retired
10 Persons (AARP), the cost of a custom hearing aid can range as
11 high as two thousand dollars and Medicare and most insurance
12 companies do not cover the cost of hearing aids; and

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14 WHEREAS, section 23-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires
15 that "[b]efore any legislative measure that mandates health
16 insurance coverage for specific health services, specific
17 diseases, or certain providers of health care services as part
18 of individual or group health insurance policies, can be
19 considered, there shall be concurrent resolutions passed
20 requesting the auditor to prepare and submit to the legislature
21 a report that assesses both the social and financial effects of
22 the proposed mandated coverage"; and

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24 WHEREAS, section 23-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes, further
25 provides that "[t]he concurrent resolutions shall designate a
26 specific legislative bill that:

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28 (1) Has been introduced in the legislature; and

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30 (2) Includes, at a minimum, information identifying the:
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- 1 (A) Specific health service, disease, or provider
- 2 that would be covered;
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- 4 (B) Extent of the coverage;
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- 6 (C) Target groups that would be covered;
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- 8 (D) Limits on utilization, if any; and
- 9
- 10 (E) Standards of care.
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12 For the purposes of this part, mandated health insurance
 13 coverage shall not include mandated options"; and

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 15 WHEREAS, section 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, further
 16 specifies the minimum information required for assessing the
 17 social and financial impact of the proposed health coverage
 18 mandate in the Auditor's report; and

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 20 WHEREAS, H.B. No. 2000 mandates health insurance coverage
 21 for hearing aids for all Medicaid, policies and contracts,
 22 hospital and medical service plan contracts, medical service
 23 corporation contracts, and health maintenance organization
 24 plans; and

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 26 WHEREAS, for hearing aids for all Medicaid, policies and
 27 contracts, hospital and medical service plan contracts, medical
 28 service corporation contracts, and health maintenance
 29 organization plans; and

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 31 WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that mandatory health
 32 insurance coverage for hearing aids, as provided in H.B.
 33 No. 2000, will substantially assist persons suffering from
 34 hearing loss in leading full lives; now, therefore,

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 36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 37 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
 38 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Auditor is
 39 requested to conduct an impact assessment report, pursuant to
 40 sections 23-51 and 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, of the social
 41 and financial impacts of mandating coverage for hearing aids for
 42 Medicaid, policies and contracts, hospital and medical service
 43 plan contracts, medical service corporation contracts, and



1 health maintenance organization plans as provided in H.B. No.
2 2000; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
5 identify the number of residents in Hawaii in the target
6 population who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind based on
7 national prevalence rates, in order to determine who may be
8 impacted by the cost of hearing aids and cochlear implants; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
11 include in the impact assessment report a survey of other states
12 in the U.S. which have implemented a mandate for hearing aids or
13 cochlear implants to examine what the experience has been in
14 these states; and

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
17 research public and private entities that provide coverage for
18 hearing aids to determine what is currently being used as a
19 standard for frequency of replacement and what, if any, cost
20 limitations are placed on the hearing aid and cochlear implant
21 coverage benefit. This research should examine whether different
22 standards are applied to adults compared to children in need of
23 these devices. Entities for this research should include, but
24 not limited to, Medicare, Medicaid and health plans in Hawaii,
25 and individuals who need, use or otherwise experience the need
26 for such devices or procedures; and

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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
29 examine current medically necessary standards of care used to
30 determine what type of hearing aid best suits an individual with
31 hearing loss. An examination of the existing technology in
32 hearing aids and possible future technology should be examined;
33 and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
36 compare the cost and utilization of cochlear implants to hearing
37 aid devices; and

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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
40 submit its findings and recommendations to the Legislature,
41 including any necessary implementing legislation, no later than
42 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
43 2009; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor and to the
3 Insurance Commissioner, who in turn is requested to transmit
4 copies to each insurer in the State that issues health insurance
5 policies.
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