

MAR 15 2011

SENATE RESOLUTION

DISCOURAGING THE PRACTICE OF CREATING AND USING SPECIALTY TIERS
FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN HEALTH PLANS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has long been a leader in ensuring
2 affordable access to health care for its citizens; and
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4 WHEREAS, health plans across the country have begun to
5 create specialty tiers for certain prescription drugs that
6 require patients to pay either a much higher copayment or a
7 percentage of the cost of the drug instead of a copayment; and
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9 WHEREAS, these specialty drugs are typically new,
10 infusible, or injectible biologics or plasma-derived therapies
11 produced in lesser quantities; and
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13 WHEREAS, many of these specialty drugs are used to treat
14 conditions such as cancer; autoimmune conditions, such as
15 Crohn's diseases, lupus, multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis,
16 myositis, scleroderma, and rheumatoid arthritis; hemophilia and
17 other bleeding disorders; hepatitis; primary and secondary
18 immune deficiencies; neuropathy; and transplant patients; and
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20 WHEREAS, high out-of-pocket costs for specialty drugs could
21 preclude patients from complying with the treatment protocols
22 prescribed by their doctors and force patients to choose between
23 paying for basic living expenses and taking their medications;
24 and
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26 WHEREAS, the health of patients who are unable to afford to
27 take the specialty medicines prescribed by their doctors will
28 further deteriorate, often necessitating more expensive
29 emergency care or forcing them to go on disability, resulting in
30 additional costs to the State; and
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32 WHEREAS, the practice of specialty tiers violates the basic
33 principle of insurance whereby individuals and groups purchase
34 health insurance plans so that they are protected from the risk
35 of needing to pay for expensive medical treatments; and
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1 WHEREAS, specialty tiers create a structure where those who
2 are sickest pay more and those who are healthy pay less; and
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4 WHEREAS, specialty tiers will not keep health care costs
5 down because there are no alternatives to these medications and
6 specialty tiers only serve as a barrier to treatment for
7 chronically ill patients; now, therefore,
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9 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-sixth
10 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2011,
11 that the practice of creating and using specialty tiers for
12 prescription drugs in health plans is discouraged and should be
13 avoided and eliminated wherever possible; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
16 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Health,
17 Director of Human Services, Director of Labor and Industrial
18 Relations, and Insurance Commissioner, who, in turn, is
19 requested to transmit copies to each insurer in the State that
20 issues health insurance policies.
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OFFERED BY: John M

Quincy H. Bee
Prizanne Chun Oakland

Will Eyer
Matthew
Clarence W. Tschirhan

