

FEB 05 2014

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

1 WHEREAS, according to the National Institutes of Health, an
2 estimated one-third of Americans between the ages of sixty-five
3 and seventy-five and around one-half of those older than
4 seventy-five have some degree of hearing loss; and

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

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9 WHEREAS, according to the Lions Club, the cost of a custom
10 low- to mid-level analog or digital hearing aid begins around
11 \$2,000 or less, and starts around \$3,000 and higher for a high-
12 end hearing aid; and

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14 WHEREAS, Medicare and most private insurance companies do
15 not cover the cost of hearing aids; and

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

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

30 (1) Has been introduced in the legislature; and
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32



- 1 (2) Includes, at a minimum, information identifying the:
- 2
- 3 (A) Specific health service, disease, or provider
- 4 that would be covered;
- 5
- 6 (B) Extent of the coverage;
- 7
- 8 (C) Target groups that would be covered;
- 9
- 10 (D) Limits on utilization, if any; and
- 11
- 12 (E) Standards of care.
- 13

14 For the purposes of this part, mandated health insurance
 15 coverage shall not include mandated optionals."; and

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

21
 22 WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 309, S.D. 1, was introduced during
 23 the Regular Session of 2013 and carried over to the Regular
 24 Session of 2014 and mandates health insurance coverage for
 25 hearing aids for every individual and group accident and health
 26 or sickness insurance policy, contract, plan, or agreement,
 27 other than an accident-only, specified disease, hospital
 28 indemnity, Medicare supplement, long-term care, dental, vision,
 29 or other limited benefit health insurance policy; hospital and
 30 medical service plan contracts; and health maintenance
 31 organization plans; and

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 33 WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that mandatory health
 34 insurance coverage for hearing aids will substantially assist
 35 persons who are deaf or hard of hearing to function effectively
 36 in the community; now, therefore,

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 38 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-seventh
 39 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, the
 40 House of Representatives concurring, that the Auditor is
 41 requested to conduct an impact assessment report, pursuant to
 42 sections 23-51 and 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, of the social
 43 and financial impacts of mandating coverage for hearing aids for
 44 individual and group accident and health or sickness insurance



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1 policies, contracts, plans, or agreements; hospital and medical
 2 service plan contracts; and health maintenance organization
 3 plans; and

4
 5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
 6 submit findings and recommendations to the Legislature,
 7 including any necessary implementing legislation, no later than
 8 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
 9 2015; and

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 11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 12 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor and to the
 13 Insurance Commissioner, who in turn is requested to transmit
 14 copies to each insurer in the State that issues health insurance
 15 policies.

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OFFERED BY: Sharon Ann Cleveland

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