

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	8 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Bonamici, Bruun, Cannon, Flores, Kotek, Maurer, Richardson, Greenlick
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Gelser
Prepared By:	Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/5 (access sub), 2/12 (access sub), 2/19 (access sub), 2/23 (full)

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires an individual health insurance policy, other than a disability income policy, to provide coverage or reimbursement of expenses for the medical treatment of injuries or illnesses caused by the insured's use of alcohol or a controlled substance as specified by the policy.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Background on Uniform Policy and Provision Laws
- Importance of alcohol/drug screening during initial examinations in emergency rooms and trauma centers
- Potential costs and savings associated with repeal
- Individual market versus group market
- Impact of intoxication exclusions
- Potential impacts to income policies
- Proposed amendments

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Replaces original measure.

BACKGROUND: Alcohol exclusion laws (Uniform Policy and Provision Laws, UPPL) were passed in the 1940s to discourage people from drinking alcoholic beverages and to save insurance companies money from injury claims, according to a George Washington University web site. The belief was that people would be less likely to drive while impaired or intoxicated if insurance companies could deny medical payments or other claims associated with injuries linked to the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

In contrast, in some jurisdictions, statutes and/or regulations explicitly prohibit insurers from denying payment for insurance benefits for losses due to the intoxication of the insured. For example, South Dakota law prohibits insurers from denying health/sickness insurance benefits for injuries sustained while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

With the advancements of alcohol and drug treatment programs and the emerging evidence showing positive effects of brief intervention and initiation of treatment as part of the emergency care, proponents assert that this policy is an example of the disjunction between evidence-based medical care advances and third party payment policies.

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners, which drafted the UPPL in 1947, voted unanimously in 2001 to amend the UPPL to repeal the Alcohol Exclusion Law.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.