

**REVENUE:** No revenue impact

**FISCAL:** Fiscal statement issued

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<b>Action:</b>	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
<b>Vote:</b>	5 - 0 - 0
<b>Yeas:</b>	George G., Kruse, Monnes Anderson, Verger, Morrisette
<b>Nays:</b>	0
<b>Exc.:</b>	0
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Ilana Weinbaum, Administrator
<b>Meeting Dates:</b>	2/26, 4/11

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Requires health insurers that provide coverage for cochlear implants to provide coverage of bilateral cochlear implants, when the treating surgeon recommends the procedure based on medical literature and findings. Exempts provision from automatic repeal.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Cost of cochlear implant
- Additional benefit of second implant
- Differences between adults and children in their ability to adapt to a second implant
- Risks associated with implants
- Definition of medically necessary
- Appeals process if insurance company denies claim
- Reasons for requiring surgeons recommendation to be based on medical evidence

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** Clarifies that a reasonable investigation of a claim for bilateral cochlear implants must include a written recommendation from the treating surgeon based on medical findings and medical literature.

**BACKGROUND:** A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. Unlike hearing aids, which amplify sound, cochlear implants actually bypass damaged portions of the inner ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerves. In 1984, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first cochlear implant for use in adults. Five years later, the FDA approved the first implant for children at least two years of age, and in 2000 the FDA approved some types of cochlear implants for children as young as 12 months. Nearly 100,000 individuals worldwide are fitted with a cochlear implant. Studies supported by the National Institute of Health (NIH) show that profoundly deaf children who receive a cochlear implant at a young age develop language skills at a rate comparable to children with normal hearing.

Some individuals with profound hearing loss have received bilateral cochlear implants, one cochlear implant in each ear. Research demonstrates that some individuals with bilateral cochlear implants are significantly better at localizing sounds and hearing speech in a noisy room, when compared to individuals with a single implant. Over 3,000 individuals in the United States have received bilateral cochlear implants, including over 1,600 children.

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