

SB 147 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to develop recommendations to create a program to reimburse the costs of oral health care for low-income COFA residents living in Oregon. Requires DCBS to convene an advisory group to advise the agency in developing recommendations and report recommendations to the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2017. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: No revenue impact.

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

After World War II, the U.S. assumed administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In 1986, the island nations under the Trust Territory were given the option of choosing between becoming a commonwealth of the U.S. or independent nations with special agreements with the U.S. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia chose independence, and entered a treaty, known as “Compact of Free Association” (COFA). The Compact agreements allow the citizens from each of these nations to freely migrate, without work permits or visas, to study, live and work in the U.S. It also allows the U.S. to have a military presence in the COFA islands in perpetuity.

In 2016, the Oregon Legislature established the COFA Premium Assistance Program (House Bill 4071). The program provides financial assistance to enable low-income citizens of the island nations in the Compact of Free Association (COFA) residing in Oregon to purchase health insurance through the federal Marketplace and to pay out-of-pocket costs associated with the coverage. As of February 2017, approximately 290 adults are enrolled in the program. The program does not provide financial assistance with dental coverage, as the Marketplace plans available in the COFA program (along with most other Marketplace health plans) do not include adult dental benefits. Stand-alone dental plans are offered on the Marketplace; however, federal subsidies are not designed to cover them, and usually are inadequate to do so. Senate Bill 147 requires DCBS to develop recommendations to create a program to reimburse dental coverage for COFA residents in Oregon.

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