

SB 734 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 2/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires individual and group health insurance policies to reimburse the cost for services provided by naturopathic physicians if the services are reimbursed when provided by licensed physicians. Exempts group practice health maintenance organizations and other insurers that employ health practitioners and do not compensate on a fee-for-service basis from naturopathic reimbursement requirement. Prohibits insurer from reducing reimbursement paid to licensed physician in order to comply with *naturopathic physician reimbursement requirement*. *Declares emergency, effective on passage.*

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces references to "individual or group health insurance policy" with "individual or group health benefit plan." Adds statutory citations for "naturopathic physician" and "physician." Clarifies reimbursement parity requirements for naturopathic physicians in independent practice.

BACKGROUND:

Naturopathic physicians (NDs) are primary care practitioners trained as specialists in natural medicine. Licensed by the Board of Naturopathic Medicine (Board), NDs receive a Doctorate of Naturopathic Medicine degree from a four-year graduate level naturopathic medical college with admission requirements comparable to those of conventional medical schools. In addition to the standard medical curriculum, naturopathic students must do extensive coursework and clinical study in natural therapeutics. There are currently nearly 1,500 NDs licensed by the Board.

Senate Bill 734 requires health benefit plans to reimburse for services provided by naturopathic physicians within their scope of practice if those services are reimbursed when provided by licensed physicians.