

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 675 Medicare Supplement Policies

SPONSOR(S): Workman and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

	REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1)	Insurance, Business & Financial Affairs Policy Committee	16 Y, 1 N	Reilly	Cooper
2)	Health & Family Services Policy Council		Lowell	Gormley
3)	General Government Policy Council			
4)				
5)				

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Under Federal law, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, who are also enrolled in Medicare Part B, have a guaranteed right to buy Medicare supplemental insurance during an open enrollment period. Medigap policies help pay some of the health care costs not covered by Medicare, including copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles. This guaranteed right does not extend to Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65. However, federal law does not preclude states from making Medigap insurance available to these Medicare beneficiaries.

House Bill 675 requires insurers who offer Medigap or other Medicare supplement policies in Florida to issue these policies on a guarantee-issue basis during the open enrollment period to Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 with end stage renal disease who are also enrolled in Medicare Part B.

The bill is effective July 1, 2009, and appears to have no financial impact on state or local governments.

HOUSE PRINCIPLES

Members are encouraged to evaluate proposed legislation in light of the following guiding principles of the House of Representatives

- Balance the state budget.
- Create a legal and regulatory environment that fosters economic growth and job creation.
- Lower the tax burden on families and businesses.
- Reverse or restrain the growth of government.
- Promote public safety.
- Promote educational accountability, excellence, and choice.
- Foster respect for the family and for innocent human life.
- Protect Florida's natural beauty.

FULL ANALYSIS I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

Medicare Coverage

Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 and older, and people under age 65 with a disability or end-stage renal disease. There are four components of Medicare Coverage:

- Part A provides coverage for inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing care (not custodial or long-term care), hospice and home health care.
- Part B provides coverage for doctors' services, outpatient care, some preventive services such as exams, lab tests, and immunizations to help prevent, find or manage a medical condition. Part B is optional coverage.
- Part C or Medicare Advantage Plans provides Part A (Hospital) and Part B (Medical) coverage through Medicare approved private companies—some companies also provide Part D (prescription drug) coverage.
- Part D provides coverage for prescription drugs through Medicare approved private health plans.¹

In Florida, approximately 3.1 million persons (2,699,180 age 65 and older and 429,344 disabled) were covered by Medicare in 2007.² Another 2007 survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, reported that Medicare provided coverage for 485,000 people in Florida under the age of 65.³ Based on data from the same report, more than 55 percent of this population had secondary coverage—33 percent of (161,000) had secondary coverage with a private insurer, while 22 percent (108,000) had secondary coverage with Medicaid.

¹ <http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/seniors/senior-health.shtml> (last visited March 29, 2009) and CMS 2009 Choosing a Medigap Policy: A Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare found at <http://www.medicare.gov> (last visited March 30, 2009).

² Medicare Aged and Disabled by State and County, as of July 1, 2007. See www.cms.hhs.gov. (last visited March 29, 2009.)

³ *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007*, U.S. Census Bureau.

Social Security Disability

The Social Security Act of 1981 provides that in order for an individual to be deemed disabled, the individual must be unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that is expected to result in death or has lasted, or can be expected to last, for a continuous period of 12 months. There are two programs under which Social Security pays disability benefits:

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for insured workers, their disabled surviving spouses and children (disabled before age 22) of disabled, retired, or deceased workers.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the aged, the blind, and people who have disabilities and very low income.

Medigap Coverage

A Medicare supplement insurance policy (“Medigap” policy) is private health insurance that is designed to supplement Original Medicare Plan coverage. Medigap policies help pay some of the health care costs that the Original Medicare Plan does not cover. Every Medigap policy must follow Federal and state laws and must be identified as “Medicare Supplement Insurance.”⁴

Under federal law,⁵ Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, who are also enrolled in Medicare Part B,⁶ have a guaranteed right to purchase a Medicare supplemental policy (Medigap insurance) during an open enrollment period.⁷ Medigap insurance companies may only provide a “standardized” Medigap policy identified by letters “A” through “L”. Each standardized Medigap policy must offer the same basic benefits, no matter which insurance company sells it. Cost is usually the only difference between Medigap policies sold by different insurance companies. Medigap insurance helps pay some of the health costs not covered by Medicare, including copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles. The open enrollment period for Medigap insurance is six months, beginning on the first day of the month the beneficiary is both age 65 or older and enrolled in Medicare Part B.⁸

The guaranteed right to buy Medigap insurance is limited to persons who qualify for Medicare based on age and does not extend to Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65. States, however, are not precluded from making Medigap insurance available to under-65 beneficiaries. At present, 28 states,⁹ to varying degrees, make Medigap insurance available to Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65,¹⁰ and all provide for the open-enrollment period. Ten of these states passed such legislation within the past 10 years.¹¹

According to a recent report by a major rating agency, consumers in Florida (followed closely by New York) are charged the most for basic Medigap policies, upwards of more than twice what consumers pay in Utah and Maryland.¹² For example, the average annual quote for a “plan A” policy (the most

⁴ CMS 2009 Choosing a Medigap Policy: A Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare. Found at <http://www.medicare.gov> (last visited March 30, 2009)

⁵ 42 U.S.C. 1395ss.

⁶ Medicare Part B helps cover doctors’ expenses and outpatient care.

⁷ Medicare beneficiaries may be able to purchase Medigap insurance after the open enrollment period has ended. However, insurance companies can use medical underwriting criteria in determining whether to issue a policy.

⁸ Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, “Choosing a Medigap Policy 2009: A Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare.” Found at: <http://www.medicare.gov> (last visited on March 2, 2009).

⁹ California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

¹⁰ According to a Florida Renal Coalition fact sheet, “Medigap for People with Kidney Failure under Age 65,” California, Massachusetts, and Vermont do not authorize Medicare beneficiaries under 65 with ESRD to purchase Medigap insurance. By contrast, Delaware’s under-65 Medigap authorization extends solely to Medicare beneficiaries with ESRD.

¹¹ The ten states are California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington.

¹² Florida and New York Residents Charged Most for Medigap Policies Utah and Maryland Residents Charged Far Less, http://www.thestreetratings.com/News/Ins_Medigap/20000612medigap.htm (last viewed March 31, 2009).

basic, with preventive care and hospital and physician coinsurance coverage) is approximately \$1,050 in Florida. The same plan in Maryland would cost approximately \$593.

ESRD Population

According to the United States Renal Data System (USRDS), there are 406,812 ESRD patients in the United States, as of December 31, 2005.¹³ There were 23,465 ESRD patients in Florida for the same period. Between 2005 and 2006, the greatest increase in new ESRD patients occurred among those age 20-44 (2.7 percent), 45-64 (6.1 percent) and 65-74 (3.5 percent). The numbers in each of these groups, represent the highest growth observed in the last five years.¹⁴

Total Medicare spending in 2006 was approximately \$355 billion, while ESRD costs rose to \$23 billion—6.4 percent of the total Medicare budget. This number has not changed over the past four years. This stability of costs is a result of comparable growth in both the Medicare and ESRD programs, which has kept proportional costs constant.

Comparison of Per Person Per Year Estimated Costs		
Age	Non-ESRD Medicare Patients	ESRD Medicare Patients*
20-44	\$5,470	\$49,678
45-54	6,701	56,891
55-64	6,993	
65-74	6,009	66,280
75+	9,766	75,006

*Primary payor and primary diagnosis only.

Recent Studies

A 1998 report by Abt Associates Inc., “Expansion of Medigap to Under-65 Medicare Beneficiaries Could Increase Access at Little Cost,”¹⁵ studied 16 states that at that time required open enrollment for Medicare beneficiaries under age 65, and concluded in part that “extending a six month open enrollment period to the under-65 population will have little effect on premium levels, and will result in little or no disruption to the Medigap market.” However, the study did note that the expansion is “associated with an increase of 2.1 percent in premiums for aged beneficiaries.”¹⁶

In 2008, the University of South Florida at St. Petersburg published a “Medigap Expansion Study”¹⁷ based on the ten states that had enacted Medigap legislation for under-65 Medicare beneficiaries subsequent to the 1998 Abt study. The results were consistent with what was found in the 1998 study.

The study reports that more than 11,000 Florida Medicare beneficiaries under 65 have ESRD. Of these, more than 80 percent have secondary insurance coverage. Approximately 2,000 of these beneficiaries lack secondary insurance.

Additional findings include:

- Nationally, 8 percent of Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 who are able to purchase Medigap insurance do so (compared with 28% for Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 and over).
- Medicare beneficiaries without secondary coverage may not adhere to treatment plans and subsequently require more expensive hospitalization and emergency room services.

¹³ U.S. Renal Data System, USRDS 2008 Annual Data Report: Atlas of Chronic Kidney Disease and End-State Renal Disease in the United States, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Bethesda, MD, 2008.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Study available at <http://www.abtassociates.com> (last accessed March 3, 2009).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Jessica Cabness & Richard Smith, University of South Florida, Medigap Expansion Study (2008).

- Transplant centers generally require those without secondary insurance to pay \$1,000 to \$5,000 to be placed on the transplant waiting list. Thus, Medicare beneficiaries who cannot afford this cost continue to receive expensive dialysis treatment indefinitely. (Florida citizens with ESRD who are on dialysis have three treatments per week.)
- Financial costs to Medicare beneficiaries without secondary insurance include the Medicare Part A deductible of \$1,086 for each hospitalization, Part B's \$135 annual deductible, and the 20 percent charge after Medicare for other outpatient medical treatment.
- The Medigap expansion will not change demand level for treatment or service, and will allow Medicare beneficiaries with adequate incomes to avoid spending down their assets to access the state's Medicaid program.¹⁸

Health Insurance Mandates and Mandated Offerings

A health insurance mandate is a legal requirement that an insurance company or health plan cover services by particular health care providers, specific benefits, or specific patient groups. Mandated offerings, on the other hand, do not mandate that certain benefits be provided. Rather, a mandated offering law can require that insurers offer an option for coverage for a particular benefit or specific patient groups, which may require a higher premium and which the insured is free to accept or reject. Florida currently has at least¹⁹ 48 mandates, ranking 13th highest in the nation for the number of mandates.²⁰ Those 48 mandates could add as much as 48 percent to the cost of health insurance in Florida.²¹ Higher costs resulting from mandates are most likely to be experienced in the small group market since these are the plans that are subject to state regulations. Costs of health insurance in Florida average \$10,848 per year for a family in the small group market. This amount is somewhat higher than the national average of \$9,768.²²

Florida enacted s. 624.215, F.S., to take into account the impact of insurance mandates and mandated offerings on premiums when making policy decisions. The section requires that any proposal for legislation that mandates health benefit coverage or mandatorily offered health coverage must be submitted with a report to AHCA and the legislative committee having jurisdiction. The report must assess the social and financial impact of the proposed coverage, including, to the extent information is available, the following:

- To what extent is the treatment or service generally used by a significant portion of the population.
- To what extent is the insurance coverage generally available.
- If the insurance coverage is not generally available, to what extent does the lack of coverage result in persons avoiding necessary health care treatment.
- If the coverage is not generally available, to what extent does the lack of coverage result in unreasonable financial hardship.
- The level of public demand for the treatment or service.
- The level of public demand for insurance coverage of the treatment or service.
- The level of interest of collective bargaining agents in negotiating for the inclusion of this coverage in group contracts.
- To what extent will the coverage increase or decrease the cost of the treatment or service.
- To what extent will the coverage increase the appropriate uses of the treatment or service.
- To what extent will the mandated treatment or service be a substitute for a more expensive treatment or service.

¹⁸ In 2003, Florida spent \$10,348 for every disabled person who was eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid.

¹⁹ Depending on how liberally the term is defined, an alternate count indicates that there are 51 health insurance mandates in Florida. "Expanding Opportunities for Health Insurance Coverage in Florida" 11, Michael Bond, Ph.D., James Madison Institute; located on March 2, 2008 at <http://www.jamesmadison.org/pdf/materials/548.pdf>.

²⁰ "Health Insurance Mandates in the States 2008," Council for Affordable Health Insurance; located on March 2, 2008 at http://www.cahi.org/cahi_contents/resources/pdf/HealthInsuranceMandates2008.pdf.

²¹ *Id.*

²² America's Health Insurance Plans, "Health Insurance: Overview and Economic Impact in the States" November, 2007

- To what extent will the coverage increase or decrease the administrative expenses of insurance companies and the premium and administrative expenses of policyholders.
- The impact of this coverage on the total cost of health care.

The bill requires an insurer offering Medigap policies in the state to offer an individual with ESRD who is under the age of 65 the option of enrolling in a Medigap policy. Consequently, this provision appears to be a mandated offering that falls within s. 624.215. However, committee staff has not received the report required by this section from the proponents of the bill.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires Medicare supplement insurers to guarantee-issue coverage to individuals within 6 months after they become eligible for Medicare due to having End Stage Renal Disease, or by January, 2010, whichever is later. The individual must also be enrolled in Medicare Part B to be entitled to guarantee-issue.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s.627.6741, F.S., relating to issuance, cancellation, nonrenewal, and replacement.

Section 2. Provides that the bill takes effect on July 1, 2009.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:
None.

2. Expenditures:
None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:
None.

2. Expenditures:
None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

To the extent that expanding eligibility for Medigap insurance increases overall claims cost for an insurer, those costs may be passed through in the form of premium increases. In particular, expanding coverage for ESRD patients may increase premiums for the over-65 beneficiaries by an appreciable amount, in light of the fact that Florida has the highest average cost for basic Medigap policies in the nation.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Correspondence from the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Office of Insurance Regulation indicates that the bill has no fiscal impact on state government.²³

III. COMMENTS

²³ Correspondence on file with staff of the Insurance, Business & Financial Affairs Policy Committee.

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax sharing with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

The bill requires Medicare supplement insurers to guarantee-issue coverage to individuals within 6 months after they become eligible for Medicare due to having End Stage Renal Disease, or by January, 2010, whichever is later. However, it does not specify a date in January, 2010.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES