AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009–10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 29

Introduced by Assembly Member Price
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Swanson)

December 1, 2008

An act to amend Section 1373 of the Health and Safety Code, and to amend Section 10277 of the Insurance Code, relating to health care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 29, as amended, Price. Health care coverage.

Existing law, the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975 (Knox-Keene Act), provides for the licensure and regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care, and makes a willful violation of the act a crime. Existing law also provides for the regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Existing law requires that every health care service plan contract or group health insurance policy that provides for termination of coverage of a dependent child upon attainment of the limiting age for dependent children shall also provide that attainment of the limiting age shall not terminate the coverage of a child under certain conditions.

This bill would prohibit, with *a* specified ~~exceptions~~ *exception*, the limiting age for dependent children covered by these health care service plan contracts and group health insurance policies from being less than 27 years of age. ~~This~~ *The* bill would also ~~authorize certain public employees an annuitants~~ *provide that no employer is required to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. The bill instead would authorize* subscribers and insureds to elect to provide coverage to ~~their~~ *those*

dependents ~~who would otherwise be ineligible for coverage~~ by contributing the premium for that coverage.

Because this bill would specify additional requirements under the Knox-Keene Act, the willful violation of which would be a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1373 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1373. (a) A plan contract may not provide an exception for other coverage if the other coverage is entitlement to Medi-Cal benefits under Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or Medicaid benefits under Subchapter 19 (commencing with Section 1396) of Chapter 7 of Title 42 of the United States Code.

Each plan contract shall be interpreted not to provide an exception for the Medi-Cal or Medicaid benefits.

A plan contract shall not provide an exemption for enrollment because of an applicant's entitlement to Medi-Cal benefits under Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or Medicaid benefits under Subchapter 19 (commencing with Section 1396) of Chapter 7 of Title 42 of the United States Code.

A plan contract may not provide that the benefits payable thereunder are subject to reduction if the individual insured has entitlement to the Medi-Cal or Medicaid benefits.

(b) A plan contract that provides coverage, whether by specific benefit or by the effect of general wording, for sterilization operations or procedures shall not impose any disclaimer,

restriction on, or limitation of, coverage relative to the covered individual's reason for sterilization.

As used in this section, "sterilization operations or procedures" shall have the same meaning as that specified in Section 10120 of the Insurance Code.

(c) Every plan contract that provides coverage to the spouse or dependents of the subscriber or spouse shall grant immediate accident and sickness coverage, from and after the moment of birth, to each newborn infant of any subscriber or spouse covered and to each minor child placed for adoption from and after the date on which the adoptive child's birth parent or other appropriate legal authority signs a written document, including, but not limited to, a health facility minor release report, a medical authorization form, or a relinquishment form, granting the subscriber or spouse the right to control health care for the adoptive child or, absent this written document, on the date there exists evidence of the subscriber's or spouse's right to control the health care of the child placed for adoption. No plan may be entered into or amended if it contains any disclaimer, waiver, or other limitation of coverage relative to the coverage or insurability of newborn infants of, or children placed for adoption with, a subscriber or spouse covered as required by this subdivision.

(d) (1) Every plan contract that provides that coverage of a dependent child of a subscriber shall terminate upon attainment of the limiting age for dependent children specified in the plan, shall also provide that attainment of the limiting age shall not operate to terminate the coverage of the child while the child is and continues to meet both of the following criteria:

(A) Incapable of self-sustaining employment by reason of a physically or mentally disabling injury, illness, or condition.

(B) Chiefly dependent upon the subscriber for support and maintenance.

(2) The plan shall notify the subscriber that the dependent child's coverage will terminate upon attainment of the limiting age unless the subscriber submits proof of the criteria described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) to the plan within 60 days of the date of receipt of the notification. The plan shall send this notification to the subscriber at least 90 days prior to the date the child attains the limiting age. Upon receipt of a request by the subscriber for continued coverage of the child and proof of the

criteria described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1), the plan shall determine whether the child meets that criteria before the child attains the limiting age. If the plan fails to make the determination by that date, it shall continue coverage of the child pending its determination.

(3) The plan may subsequently request information about a dependent child whose coverage is continued beyond the limiting age under this subdivision but not more frequently than annually after the two-year period following the child's attainment of the limiting age.

(4) If the subscriber changes carriers to another plan or to a health insurer, the new plan or insurer shall continue to provide coverage for the dependent child. The new plan or insurer may request information about the dependent child initially and not more frequently than annually thereafter to determine if the child continues to satisfy the criteria in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1). The subscriber shall submit the information requested by the new plan or insurer within 60 days of receiving the request.

(5) Except as specified in this ~~section~~ *paragraph*, under no circumstances shall the limiting age be less than 27 years of age. Nothing in this section shall require employers ~~participating in the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act~~ to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. ~~Employees or annuitants receiving benefits pursuant to the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act~~ *Subscribers* may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but are less than 27 years of age, provided they contribute the premium for that coverage. ~~Nothing in this section shall require the University of California to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. Employees or annuitants of the University of California may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age, provided they contribute the premium for that coverage. Nothing in this section shall require a city to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. Employees or annuitants of a city may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age, provided~~

~~they contribute the premium for that coverage.~~ The provision requiring the limiting age to be a minimum of 27 years of age shall not be effective for employment contracts subject to collective bargaining that are effective prior to January 1, 2010. Any employment contract subject to collective bargaining that is issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2010, shall be subject to this section.

(e) A plan contract that provides coverage, whether by specific benefit or by the effect of general wording, for both an employee and one or more covered persons dependent upon the employee and provides for an extension of the coverage for any period following a termination of employment of the employee shall also provide that this extension of coverage shall apply to dependents upon the same terms and conditions precedent as applied to the covered employee, for the same period of time, subject to payment of premiums, if any, as required by the terms of the policy and subject to any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

(f) A group contract shall not discriminate against handicapped persons or against groups containing handicapped persons. Nothing in this subdivision shall preclude reasonable provisions in a plan contract against liability for services or reimbursement of the handicap condition or conditions relating thereto, as may be allowed by rules of the director.

(g) Every group contract shall set forth the terms and conditions under which subscribers and enrollees may remain in the plan in the event the group ceases to exist, the group contract is terminated ~~or~~, an individual subscriber leaves the group, or the enrollees' eligibility status changes.

(h) (1) A health care service plan or specialized health care service plan may provide for coverage of, or for payment for, professional mental health services, or vision care services, or for the exclusion of these services. If the terms and conditions include coverage for services provided in a general acute care hospital or an acute psychiatric hospital as defined in Section 1250 and do not restrict or modify the choice of providers, the coverage shall extend to care provided by a psychiatric health facility as defined in Section 1250.2 operating pursuant to licensure by the State Department of Mental Health. A health care service plan that offers outpatient mental health services but does not cover these services in all of its group contracts shall communicate to prospective group

contractholders as to the availability of outpatient coverage for the treatment of mental or nervous disorders.

(2) No plan shall prohibit the member from selecting any psychologist who is licensed pursuant to the Psychology Licensing Law (Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), any optometrist who is the holder of a certificate issued pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 3000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code or, upon referral by a physician and surgeon licensed pursuant to the Medical Practice Act (Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 2000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), (A) any marriage and family therapist who is the holder of a license under Section 4980.50 of the Business and Professions Code, (B) any licensed clinical social worker who is the holder of a license under Section 4996 of the Business and Professions Code, (C) any registered nurse licensed pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 2700) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, who possesses a master's degree in psychiatric-mental health nursing and is listed as a psychiatric-mental health nurse by the Board of Registered Nursing, or (D) any advanced practice registered nurse certified as a clinical nurse specialist pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 2838) of Chapter 6 of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code who participates in expert clinical practice in the specialty of psychiatric-mental health nursing, to perform the particular services covered under the terms of the plan, and the certificate holder is expressly authorized by law to perform these services.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to allow any certificate holder or licensee enumerated in this section to perform professional mental health services beyond his or her field or fields of competence as established by his or her education, training, and experience.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "marriage and family therapist" means a licensed marriage and family therapist who has received specific instruction in assessment, diagnosis, prognosis, and counseling, and psychotherapeutic treatment of premarital, marriage, family, and child relationship dysfunctions that is equivalent to the instruction required for licensure on January 1, 1981.

(5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to allow a member to select and obtain mental health or psychological or vision care services from a certificate *holder* or licenseholder who is not directly affiliated with or under contract to the health care service plan or specialized health care service plan to which the member belongs. All health care service plans and individual practice associations that offer mental health benefits shall make reasonable efforts to make available to their members the services of licensed psychologists. However, a failure of a plan or association to comply with the requirements of the preceding sentence shall not constitute a misdemeanor.

(6) As used in this subdivision, "individual practice association" means an entity as defined in subsection (5) of Section 1307 of the federal Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. ~~300e-1 (5))~~ *300e-1(5))*.

(7) Health care service plan coverage for professional mental health services may include community residential treatment services that are alternatives to inpatient care and that are directly affiliated with the plan or to which enrollees are referred by providers affiliated with the plan.

(i) If the plan utilizes arbitration to settle disputes, the plan contracts shall set forth the type of disputes subject to arbitration, the process to be utilized, and how it is to be initiated.

(j) A plan contract that provides benefits that accrue after a certain time of confinement in a health care facility shall specify what constitutes a day of confinement or the number of consecutive hours of confinement that are requisite to the commencement of benefits.

(k) If a plan provides coverage for a dependent child who is over 18 years of age and enrolled as a full-time student at a secondary or postsecondary educational institution, the following shall apply:

(1) Any break in the school calendar shall not disqualify the dependent child from coverage.

(2) If the dependent child takes a medical leave of absence, and the nature of the dependent child's injury, illness, or condition would render the dependent child incapable of self-sustaining employment, the provisions of subdivision (d) shall apply if the dependent child is chiefly dependent on the subscriber for support and maintenance.

(3) (A) If the dependent child takes a medical leave of absence from school, but the nature of the dependent child's injury, illness, or condition does not meet the requirements of paragraph (2), the dependent child's coverage shall not terminate for a period not to exceed 12 months or until the date on which the coverage is scheduled to terminate pursuant to the terms and conditions of the plan, whichever comes first. The period of coverage under this paragraph shall commence on the first day of the medical leave of absence from the school or on the date the physician determines the illness prevented the dependent child from attending school, whichever comes first. Any break in the school calendar shall not disqualify the dependent child from coverage under this paragraph.

(B) Documentation or certification of the medical necessity for a leave of absence from school shall be submitted to the plan at least 30 days prior to the medical leave of absence from the school, if the medical reason for the absence and the absence are foreseeable, or 30 days after the start date of the medical leave of absence from school and shall be considered prima facie evidence of entitlement to coverage under this paragraph.

(4) This subdivision shall not apply to a specialized health care service plan or to a Medicare supplement plan.

SEC. 2. Section 10277 of the Insurance Code is amended to read:

10277. (a) A group health insurance policy that provides that coverage of a dependent child of an employee or other member of the covered group shall terminate upon attainment of the limiting age for dependent children specified in the policy, shall also provide that attainment of the limiting age shall not operate to terminate the coverage of the child while the child is and continues to meet both of the following criteria:

(1) Incapable of self-sustaining employment by reason of a physically or mentally disabling injury, illness, or condition.

(2) Chiefly dependent upon the employee or member for support and maintenance.

(b) The insurer shall notify the employee or member that the dependent child's coverage will terminate upon attainment of the limiting age unless the employee or member submits proof of the criteria described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a) to the insurer within 60 days of the date of receipt of the notification. The insurer shall send this notification to the employee or member

at least 90 days prior to the date the child attains the limiting age. Upon receipt of a request by the employee or member for continued coverage of the child and proof of the criteria described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a), the insurer shall determine whether the dependent child meets that criteria before the child attains the limiting age. If the insurer fails to make the determination by that date, it shall continue coverage of the child pending its determination.

(c) The insurer may subsequently request information about a dependent child whose coverage is continued beyond the limiting age under subdivision (a), but not more frequently than annually after the two-year period following the child's attainment of the limiting age.

(d) If the employee or member changes carriers to another insurer or to a health care service plan, the new insurer or plan shall continue to provide coverage for the dependent child. The new plan or insurer may request information about the dependent child initially and not more frequently than annually thereafter to determine if the child continues to satisfy the criteria in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a). The employee or member shall submit the information requested by the new plan or insurer within 60 days of receiving the request.

(e) If a group health insurance policy provides coverage for a dependent child who is over 18 years of age and enrolled as a full-time student at a secondary or postsecondary educational institution, the following shall apply:

(1) Any break in the school calendar shall not disqualify the dependent child from coverage.

(2) If the dependent child takes a medical leave of absence, and the nature of the dependent child's injury, illness, or condition would render the dependent child incapable of self-sustaining employment, the provisions of subdivision (a) shall apply if the dependent child is chiefly dependent on the policyholder for support and maintenance.

(3) (A) If the dependent child takes a medical leave of absence from school, but the nature of the dependent child's injury, illness, or condition does not meet the requirements of paragraph (2), the dependent child's coverage shall not terminate for a period not to exceed 12 months or until the date on which the coverage is scheduled to terminate pursuant to the terms and conditions of the

policy, whichever comes first. The period of coverage under this paragraph shall commence on the first day of the medical leave of absence from the school or on the date the physician determines the illness prevented the dependent child from attending school, whichever comes first. Any break in the school calendar shall not disqualify the dependent child from coverage under this paragraph.

(B) Documentation or certification of the medical necessity for a leave of absence from school shall be submitted to the insurer at least 30 days prior to the medical leave of absence from the school, if the medical reason for the absence and the absence are foreseeable, or 30 days after the start date of the medical leave of absence from school and shall be considered prima facie evidence of entitlement to coverage under this paragraph.

(4) This subdivision shall not apply to a policy of specialized health insurance, Medicare supplement insurance, CHAMPUS-supplement~~,~~ or TRICARE-supplement insurance policies, or to hospital-only, accident-only, or specified disease insurance policies that reimburse for hospital, medical, or surgical benefits.

(f) Except as specified in this subdivision, under no circumstances shall the limiting age under subdivision (a) be less than 27 years of age. Nothing in this section shall require employers ~~participating in the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act~~ to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. Employees or ~~annuitants receiving benefits pursuant to the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act~~ *members* may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but are less than 27 years of age, provided they contribute the premium for that coverage. ~~Nothing in this section shall require the University of California to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. Employees or annuitants of the University of California may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age, provided they contribute the premium for that coverage. Nothing in this section shall require a city to pay the cost of coverage for dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age. Employees or annuitants of a city may elect to provide coverage to their dependents who are at least 23 years of age, but less than 27 years of age, provided~~

~~they contribute the premium for that coverage.~~ The provision requiring the limiting age to be a minimum of 27 years of age shall not be effective for employment contracts subject to collective bargaining that are effective prior to January 1, 2010. Any employment contract subject to collective bargaining that is issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2010, shall be subject to the provisions of this section.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

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