

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 678

Introduced by Assembly Member Pan

February 17, 2011

An act to amend Section 14132.72 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to Medi-Cal.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 678, as introduced, Pan. Medi-Cal: telemedicine.

Existing law provides for the Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, pursuant to which medical benefits are provided to public assistance recipients and certain other low-income persons. Existing law recognizes telemedicine as a legitimate means by which an individual may receive medical services under the Medi-Cal program.

This bill would make a technical, nonsubstantive change.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 14132.72 of the Welfare and Institutions
- 2 Code is amended to read:
- 3 14132.72. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to recognize
- 4 the practice of telemedicine as a legitimate means by which an
- 5 individual may receive medical services from a health care
- 6 provider, without person-to-person contact with the provider.

1 (b) For the purposes of this section, “telemedicine” and
2 “interactive” are defined as those terms are defined in subdivision
3 (a) of Section 2290.5 of the Business and Professions Code.

4 (c) (1) Commencing July 1, 1997, face-to-face contact between
5 a health care provider and a patient shall not be required under the
6 Medi-Cal program for services appropriately provided through
7 telemedicine, subject to reimbursement policies developed by the
8 Medi-Cal program to compensate licensed health care providers
9 who provide health care services, that are otherwise covered by
10 the Medi-Cal program, through telemedicine. The audio and visual
11 telemedicine system used shall, at a minimum, have the capability
12 of meeting the procedural definition of the Current Procedural
13 Terminology Fourth Edition (CPT-4) codes which represent the
14 service provided through telemedicine. The telecommunications
15 equipment shall be of a level of quality to adequately complete all
16 necessary components to document the level of service for the
17 CPT-4 code billed. If a peripheral diagnostic scope is required to
18 assess the patient, it shall provide adequate resolution or audio
19 quality for decisionmaking.

20 (2) The department shall report to the appropriate committees
21 of the Legislature, by January 1, 2000, on the application of
22 telemedicine to provide home health care; emergency care; critical
23 and intensive care, including neonatal care; psychiatric evaluation;
24 psychotherapy; and medical management as potential Medi-Cal
25 benefits.

26 (d) The Medi-Cal program shall not be required to pay for
27 consultation provided by the health care provider by telephone or
28 facsimile machines.

29 (e) The Medi-Cal program shall pursue private or federal
30 funding to conduct an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness and
31 quality of health care provided through telemedicine by those
32 providers who are reimbursed for telemedicine services by the
33 program.