



Why We Need a Seattle Resolution Supporting Insurance Coverage of Abortion

Federal law currently imposes unfair limitations on insurance coverage of abortion. Progressive cities and counties nationwide are taking a stand against such restrictions by passing **resolutions that call on federal and state lawmakers to reinstate and protect coverage for abortion**. Advocates on the ground in these cities are coordinating with a national coalition working with all levels of government to reinstate full public insurance coverage for vital reproductive health care services.

Who Is Impacted? The Direct Impact of Bans on Abortion Coverage in Seattle

The Hyde Amendment, first passed by Congress in 1976, **bans Medicaid coverage of abortion**. Federal law also **prohibits insurance coverage of abortion** for women and their dependents who receive federally sponsored health care from the following: Medicare, the military health system (TRICARE), the Veterans' Administration (VA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), federal prisons, and the Peace Corps. As of 2012, over 70,000 women in Seattle received some form of public health insurance.

Washington is one of only 17 states¹ that fills the critical gap in funding created by the Hyde Amendment by providing abortion coverage for Medicaid recipients through state funds. Still, countless women fall through the cracks because they are unable to navigate the Medicaid system, or are unaware of their funding options.

Many women of reproductive age² in Seattle who are not enrolled in Medicaid, but who receive their insurance from the federal government, are subject to other federal restrictions on abortion coverage, including 1,590 such women in Seattle who receive Medicare coverage, 1,569 Seattle women with TRICARE coverage, and many more including federal employees and women with VA health insurance.³

Restoring federal Medicaid coverage of abortion care would eliminate administrative burdens that leave many Washington women in the dark, and others shut out from accessing coverage at all. **Making abortion coverage straightforward, transparent, and accessible to all women, ensures they are able to make the best decision for their families.**

Private Insurance Coverage of Abortion in Washington: The Reproductive Parity Act

Despite the relatively strong reproductive health protections in Washington, women still face challenges to accessing insurance coverage through private insurance. The Washington Reproductive Parity Act (RPA), proposed in the 2012-14 legislative sessions, would require insurance plans in Washington that cover maternity care to also cover abortion.

¹ Guttmacher Institute, State Policies in Brief, State Funding of Abortion Under Medicaid (July 1, 2014), *available at* http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_SFAM.pdf.

² For purposes of these data, "reproductive age" refers to ages 18-44.

³ Data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Demographic and Housing Estimates, Washington and Washington, King County, Seattle (2012 data, by age and sex).

There is still a significant need for the RPA. The Affordable Care Act allows states to ban abortion insurance coverage and imposes administrative hurdles that create a disincentive for plans to include abortion coverage. Indeed, initially, *half* of health insurance plans filed under the Washington State Health Benefit Exchange *excluded* coverage for abortion. This gap in coverage will affect thousands of women, and demonstrates why **the time is now** to ensure insurance coverage of abortion for all women.

A Growing Movement: Removing Restrictions on Insurance Coverage of Abortion

Twenty-five states currently have laws banning insurance coverage of abortion on either their health insurance exchanges or statewide, many of which have been enacted since the passage of the Affordable Care Act.⁴ Washington is one of the few states to even consider pro-active legislation, with the Reproductive Parity Act.

Cities and other local governments are leading the way in calling for an end to all federal and state restrictions on insurance coverage of abortion care. Thus far, local governments in Travis County, TX, New York City, Philadelphia (Board of Health), Cambridge, MA, and San Francisco have all passed resolutions in support of coverage for comprehensive reproductive health care. Advocates and officials in Chicago, IL, Minneapolis, MN, and Boston, MA are working toward similar action.

Seattle has the opportunity to join a growing chorus of voices declaring that **all women deserve access to insurance coverage of abortion.**

Please tell Seattle City Council that you support a resolution that affirms the idea that all women deserve access to insurance coverage of abortion.

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⁴ Guttmacher Institute, State Policies in Brief, Restricting Insurance Coverage of Abortion (July 1, 2014), available at http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_RICA.pdf.