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SENATE BILL NO. 729

Offered January 24, 2000

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 38.2-3412.1:01 of the Code of Virginia, relating to health care coverage; biologically based mental illness.*

Patrons—Martin, Barry, Bolling, Norment and Stolle

Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 38.2-3412.1:01 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 38.2-3412.1:01. (Effective until July 1, 2004) Coverage for biologically based mental illness.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 38.2-3419, each insurer proposing to issue ~~individual or group~~ accident and sickness insurance policies providing hospital, medical and surgical, or major medical coverage on an expense-incurred basis; each corporation providing individual or group accident and sickness subscription contracts; and each health maintenance organization providing a health care plan for health care services shall provide coverage for biologically based mental illnesses.

B. Benefits for biologically based mental illnesses may be different from benefits for other illnesses, conditions or disorders if such benefits meet the medical criteria necessary to achieve the same outcomes as are achieved by the benefits for any other illness, condition or disorder that is covered by such policy or contract.

C. Coverage for biologically based mental illnesses shall neither be different nor separate from coverage for any other illness, condition or disorder for purposes of determining deductibles, benefit year or lifetime durational limits, benefit year or lifetime dollar limits, lifetime episodes or treatment limits, copayment and coinsurance factors, and benefit year maximum for deductibles and copayment and coinsurance factors.

D. Nothing shall preclude the undertaking of usual and customary procedures to determine the appropriateness of, and medical necessity for, treatment of biologically based mental illnesses under this option, provided that all such appropriateness and medical necessity determinations are made in the same manner as those determinations made for the treatment of any other illness, condition or disorder covered by such policy or contract.

E. For purposes of this section, a "biologically based mental illness" is any mental or nervous condition caused by a biological disorder of the brain that results in a clinically significant syndrome that substantially limits the person's functioning; specifically, the following diagnoses are defined as biologically based mental illness as they apply to adults and children: schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, and drug and alcoholism addiction.

F. The provisions of this section shall not apply to (i) short-term travel, accident only, limited or specified disease policies, (ii) short-term nonrenewable policies of not more than six months' duration, (iii) policies, contracts, or plans issued in the individual market or small group markets to employers with ~~25~~*fifty* or fewer employees, or (iv) policies or contracts designed for issuance to persons eligible for coverage under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, known as Medicare, or any other similar coverage under state or federal governmental plans.

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