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**HOUSE BILL NO. 730**

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 12, 2010

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 38.2-3418.5 of the Code of Virginia, relating to health insurance coverage for early intervention services; autism.*

Patron—Albo

Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 38.2-3418.5 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 38.2-3418.5. Coverage for early intervention services.

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 medically necessary early intervention services under such policy, contract or plan delivered, issued for delivery or renewed in this Commonwealth on and after July 1, 1998. Such coverage shall be limited to a benefit of \$5,000 per insured or member per policy or calendar year and, except as set forth in subsection C, shall be subject to such dollar limits, deductibles and coinsurance factors as are no less favorable than for physical illness generally.

B. For the purpose of this section, "early intervention services" means medically necessary speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, *applied behavior analysis*, and assistive technology services and devices for dependents from birth to age three who are certified by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services as eligible for services under Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1471 et seq.). "Medically necessary early intervention services for the population certified by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services" shall mean those services designed to help an individual attain or retain the capability to function age-appropriately within his environment, and shall include services that enhance functional ability without effecting a cure.

C. The cost of early intervention services shall not be applied to any contractual provision limiting the total amount of coverage paid by the insurer, corporation or health maintenance organization to or on behalf of the insured or member during the insured's or member's lifetime.

D. "Financial costs," as used in this section, shall mean any copayment, coinsurance, or deductible in the policy or plan. Financial costs may be paid through the use of federal Part H program funds, state general funds, or local government funds appropriated to implement Part H services for families who may refuse the use of their insurance to pay for early intervention services due to a financial cost.

E. The provisions of this section shall not apply to short-term travel, accident only, limited or specified disease policies, 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 governmental plans or to short-term nonrenewable policies of not more than six months' duration. *F. Effective July 1, 2010, an insurer, corporation, or health maintenance organization providing coverage for early intervention services pursuant to this section shall not deny coverage as required by this section for medically necessary speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, applied behavior analysis, and assistive technology services and devices to any minor dependent as a result of the minor dependent's being diagnosed with autism.*

INTRODUCED

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