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**HOUSE BILL NO. 2138**

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 9, 2013

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-2818, 30-58.1, and 38.2-3431 of the Code of Virginia; to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 53, consisting of sections numbered 30-339 through 30-345; and to repeal Article 2 (§§ 2.2-2503, 2.2-2504, and 2.2-2505) of Chapter 25 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the establishment of the Health Insurance Reform Commission; repeal of the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits.*

Patron—Byron

Referred to Committee on Rules

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

**1. That §§ 2.2-2818, 30-58.1, and 38.2-3431 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 53, consisting of sections numbered 30-339 through 30-345, as follows:**

**§ 2.2-2818. Health and related insurance for state employees.**

A. The Department of Human Resource Management shall establish a plan, subject to the approval of the Governor, for providing health insurance coverage, including chiropractic treatment, hospitalization, medical, surgical and major medical coverage, for state employees and retired state employees with the Commonwealth paying the cost thereof to the extent of the coverage included in such plan. The same plan shall be offered to all part-time state employees, but the total cost shall be paid by such part-time employees. The Department of Human Resource Management shall administer this section. The plan chosen shall provide means whereby coverage for the families or dependents of state employees may be purchased. Except for part-time employees, the Commonwealth may pay all or a portion of the cost thereof, and for such portion as the Commonwealth does not pay, the employee, including a part-time employee, may purchase the coverage by paying the additional cost over the cost of coverage for an employee.

Such contribution shall be financed through appropriations provided by law.

**B. The plan shall:**

1. Include coverage for low-dose screening mammograms for determining the presence of occult breast cancer. Such coverage shall make available one screening mammogram to persons age 35 through 39, one such mammogram biennially to persons age 40 through 49, and one such mammogram annually to persons age 50 and over and may be limited to a benefit of \$50 per mammogram subject to such dollar limits, deductibles, and coinsurance factors as are no less favorable than for physical illness generally.

The term "mammogram" shall mean an X-ray examination of the breast using equipment dedicated specifically for mammography, including but not limited to the X-ray tube, filter, compression device, screens, film, and cassettes, with an average radiation exposure of less than one rad mid-breast, two views of each breast.

In order to be considered a screening mammogram for which coverage shall be made available under this section:

a. The mammogram shall be (i) ordered by a health care practitioner acting within the scope of his licensure and, in the case of an enrollee of a health maintenance organization, by the health maintenance organization provider; (ii) performed by a registered technologist; (iii) interpreted by a qualified radiologist; and (iv) performed under the direction of a person licensed to practice medicine and surgery and certified by the American Board of Radiology or an equivalent examining body. A copy of the mammogram report shall be sent or delivered to the health care practitioner who ordered it;

b. The equipment used to perform the mammogram shall meet the standards set forth by the Virginia Department of Health in its radiation protection regulations; and

c. The mammography film shall be retained by the radiologic facility performing the examination in accordance with the American College of Radiology guidelines or state law.

2. Include coverage for postpartum services providing inpatient care and a home visit or visits that shall be in accordance with the medical criteria, outlined in the most current version of or an official update to the "Guidelines for Perinatal Care" prepared by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists or the "Standards for Obstetric-Gynecologic Services" prepared by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Such coverage shall be provided incorporating any changes in such Guidelines or Standards within six months of the publication

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HB2138

59 of such Guidelines or Standards or any official amendment thereto.

60 3. Include an appeals process for resolution of complaints that shall provide reasonable procedures  
61 for the resolution of such complaints and shall be published and disseminated to all covered state  
62 employees. The appeals process shall be compliant with federal rules and regulations governing  
63 nonfederal, self-insured governmental health plans. The appeals process shall include a separate  
64 expedited emergency appeals procedure that shall provide resolution within time frames established by  
65 federal law. For appeals involving adverse decisions as defined in § 32.1-137.7, the Department shall  
66 contract with one or more independent review organizations to review such decisions. Independent  
67 review organizations are entities that conduct independent external review of adverse benefit  
68 determinations. The Department shall adopt regulations to assure that the independent review  
69 organization conducting the reviews has adequate standards, credentials and experience for such review.  
70 The independent review organization shall examine the final denial of claims to determine whether the  
71 decision is objective, clinically valid, and compatible with established principles of health care. The  
72 decision of the independent review organization shall (i) be in writing, (ii) contain findings of fact as to  
73 the material issues in the case and the basis for those findings, and (iii) be final and binding if  
74 consistent with law and policy.

75 Prior to assigning an appeal to an independent review organization, the Department shall verify that  
76 the independent review organization conducting the review of a denial of claims has no relationship or  
77 association with (i) the covered person or the covered person's authorized representative; (ii) the treating  
78 health care provider, or any of its employees or affiliates; (iii) the medical care facility at which the  
79 covered service would be provided, or any of its employees or affiliates; or (iv) the development or  
80 manufacture of the drug, device, procedure or other therapy that is the subject of the final denial of a  
81 claim. The independent review organization shall not be a subsidiary of, nor owned or controlled by, a  
82 health plan, a trade association of health plans, or a professional association of health care providers.  
83 There shall be no liability on the part of and no cause of action shall arise against any officer or  
84 employee of an independent review organization for any actions taken or not taken or statements made  
85 by such officer or employee in good faith in the performance of his powers and duties.

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

95 For persons previously covered under the plan, there shall be no denial of coverage due to the  
96 existence of a preexisting condition. The cost of early intervention services shall not be applied to any  
97 contractual provision limiting the total amount of coverage paid by the insurer to or on behalf of the  
98 insured during the insured's lifetime.

99 5. Include coverage for prescription drugs and devices approved by the United States Food and Drug  
100 Administration for use as contraceptives.

101 6. Not deny coverage for any drug approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for  
102 use in the treatment of cancer on the basis that the drug has not been approved by the United States  
103 Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of the specific type of cancer for which the drug has  
104 been prescribed, if the drug has been recognized as safe and effective for treatment of that specific type  
105 of cancer in one of the standard reference compendia.

106 7. Not deny coverage for any drug prescribed to treat a covered indication so long as the drug has  
107 been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for at least one indication and the  
108 drug is recognized for treatment of the covered indication in one of the standard reference compendia or  
109 in substantially accepted peer-reviewed medical literature.

110 8. Include coverage for equipment, supplies and outpatient self-management training and education,  
111 including medical nutrition therapy, for the treatment of insulin-dependent diabetes, insulin-using  
112 diabetes, gestational diabetes and noninsulin-using diabetes if prescribed by a healthcare professional  
113 legally authorized to prescribe such items under law. To qualify for coverage under this subdivision,  
114 diabetes outpatient self-management training and education shall be provided by a certified, registered or  
115 licensed health care professional.

116 9. Include coverage for reconstructive breast surgery. For purposes of this section, "reconstructive  
117 breast surgery" means surgery performed on and after July 1, 1998, (i) coincident with a mastectomy  
118 performed for breast cancer or (ii) following a mastectomy performed for breast cancer to reestablish  
119 symmetry between the two breasts. For persons previously covered under the plan, there shall be no  
120 denial of coverage due to preexisting conditions.

10. Include coverage for annual pap smears, including coverage, on and after July 1, 1999, for annual testing performed by any FDA-approved gynecologic cytology screening technologies.

11. Include coverage providing a minimum stay in the hospital of not less than 48 hours for a patient following a radical or modified radical mastectomy and 24 hours of inpatient care following a total mastectomy or a partial mastectomy with lymph node dissection for treatment of breast cancer. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed as requiring the provision of inpatient coverage where the attending physician in consultation with the patient determines that a shorter period of hospital stay is appropriate.

12. Include coverage (i) to persons age 50 and over and (ii) to persons age 40 and over who are at high risk for prostate cancer, according to the most recent published guidelines of the American Cancer Society, for one PSA test in a 12-month period and digital rectal examinations, all in accordance with American Cancer Society guidelines. For the purpose of this subdivision, "PSA testing" means the analysis of a blood sample to determine the level of prostate specific antigen.

13. Permit any individual covered under the plan direct access to the health care services of a participating specialist (i) authorized to provide services under the plan and (ii) selected by the covered individual. The plan shall have a procedure by which an individual who has an ongoing special condition may, after consultation with the primary care physician, receive a referral to a specialist for such condition who shall be responsible for and capable of providing and coordinating the individual's primary and specialty care related to the initial specialty care referral. If such an individual's care would most appropriately be coordinated by such a specialist, the plan shall refer the individual to a specialist. For the purposes of this subdivision, "special condition" means a condition or disease that is (i) life-threatening, degenerative, or disabling and (ii) requires specialized medical care over a prolonged period of time. Within the treatment period authorized by the referral, such specialist shall be permitted to treat the individual without a further referral from the individual's primary care provider and may authorize such referrals, procedures, tests, and other medical services related to the initial referral as the individual's primary care provider would otherwise be permitted to provide or authorize. The plan shall have a procedure by which an individual who has an ongoing special condition that requires ongoing care from a specialist may receive a standing referral to such specialist for the treatment of the special condition. If the primary care provider, in consultation with the plan and the specialist, if any, determines that such a standing referral is appropriate, the plan or issuer shall make such a referral to a specialist. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the plan from requiring a participating specialist to provide written notification to the covered individual's primary care physician of any visit to such specialist. Such notification may include a description of the health care services rendered at the time of the visit.

14. Include provisions allowing employees to continue receiving health care services for a period of up to 90 days from the date of the primary care physician's notice of termination from any of the plan's provider panels. The plan shall notify any provider at least 90 days prior to the date of termination of the provider, except when the provider is terminated for cause.

For a period of at least 90 days from the date of the notice of a provider's termination from any of the plan's provider panels, except when a provider is terminated for cause, a provider shall be permitted by the plan to render health care services to any of the covered employees who (i) were in an active course of treatment from the provider prior to the notice of termination and (ii) request to continue receiving health care services from the provider.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision, any provider shall be permitted by the plan to continue rendering health services to any covered employee who has entered the second trimester of pregnancy at the time of the provider's termination of participation, except when a provider is terminated for cause. Such treatment shall, at the covered employee's option, continue through the provision of postpartum care directly related to the delivery.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision, any provider shall be permitted to continue rendering health services to any covered employee who is determined to be terminally ill (as defined under § 1861(dd)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act) at the time of a provider's termination of participation, except when a provider is terminated for cause. Such treatment shall, at the covered employee's option, continue for the remainder of the employee's life for care directly related to the treatment of the terminal illness.

A provider who continues to render health care services pursuant to this subdivision shall be reimbursed in accordance with the carrier's agreement with such provider existing immediately before the provider's termination of participation.

15. Include coverage for patient costs incurred during participation in clinical trials for treatment studies on cancer, including ovarian cancer trials.

The reimbursement for patient costs incurred during participation in clinical trials for treatment studies on cancer shall be determined in the same manner as reimbursement is determined for other

182 medical and surgical procedures. Such coverage shall have durational limits, dollar limits, deductibles,  
183 copayments and coinsurance factors that are no less favorable than for physical illness generally.

184 For purposes of this subdivision:

185 "Cooperative group" means a formal network of facilities that collaborate on research projects and  
186 have an established NIH-approved peer review program operating within the group. "Cooperative group"  
187 includes (i) the National Cancer Institute Clinical Cooperative Group and (ii) the National Cancer  
188 Institute Community Clinical Oncology Program.

189 "FDA" means the Federal Food and Drug Administration.

190 "Multiple project assurance contract" means a contract between an institution and the federal  
191 Department of Health and Human Services that defines the relationship of the institution to the federal  
192 Department of Health and Human Services and sets out the responsibilities of the institution and the  
193 procedures that will be used by the institution to protect human subjects.

194 "NCI" means the National Cancer Institute.

195 "NIH" means the National Institutes of Health.

196 "Patient" means a person covered under the plan established pursuant to this section.

197 "Patient cost" means the cost of a medically necessary health care service that is incurred as a result  
198 of the treatment being provided to a patient for purposes of a clinical trial. "Patient cost" does not  
199 include (i) the cost of nonhealth care services that a patient may be required to receive as a result of the  
200 treatment being provided for purposes of a clinical trial, (ii) costs associated with managing the research  
201 associated with the clinical trial, or (iii) the cost of the investigational drug or device.

202 Coverage for patient costs incurred during clinical trials for treatment studies on cancer shall be  
203 provided if the treatment is being conducted in a Phase II, Phase III, or Phase IV clinical trial. Such  
204 treatment may, however, be provided on a case-by-case basis if the treatment is being provided in a  
205 Phase I clinical trial.

206 The treatment described in the previous paragraph shall be provided by a clinical trial approved by:

- 207 a. The National Cancer Institute;  
208 b. An NCI cooperative group or an NCI center;  
209 c. The FDA in the form of an investigational new drug application;  
210 d. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs; or  
211 e. An institutional review board of an institution in the Commonwealth that has a multiple project  
212 assurance contract approved by the Office of Protection from Research Risks of the NCI.

213 The facility and personnel providing the treatment shall be capable of doing so by virtue of their  
214 experience, training, and expertise.

215 Coverage under this subdivision shall apply only if:

- 216 (1) There is no clearly superior, noninvestigational treatment alternative;  
217 (2) The available clinical or preclinical data provide a reasonable expectation that the treatment will  
218 be at least as effective as the noninvestigational alternative; and  
219 (3) The patient and the physician or health care provider who provides services to the patient under  
220 the plan conclude that the patient's participation in the clinical trial would be appropriate, pursuant to  
221 procedures established by the plan.

222 16. Include coverage providing a minimum stay in the hospital of not less than 23 hours for a  
223 covered employee following a laparoscopy-assisted vaginal hysterectomy and 48 hours for a covered  
224 employee following a vaginal hysterectomy, as outlined in Milliman & Robertson's nationally recognized  
225 guidelines. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed as requiring the provision of the total hours  
226 referenced when the attending physician, in consultation with the covered employee, determines that a  
227 shorter hospital stay is appropriate.

228 17. Include coverage for biologically based mental illness.

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

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

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

covered by such policy or contract.

18. Offer and make available coverage for the treatment of morbid obesity through gastric bypass surgery or such other methods as may be recognized by the National Institutes of Health as effective for the long-term reversal of morbid obesity. Such coverage shall have durational limits, dollar limits, deductibles, copayments and coinsurance factors that are no less favorable than for physical illness generally. Access to surgery for morbid obesity shall not be restricted based upon dietary or any other criteria not approved by the National Institutes of Health. For purposes of this subdivision, "morbid obesity" means (i) a weight that is at least 100 pounds over or twice the ideal weight for frame, age, height, and gender as specified in the 1983 Metropolitan Life Insurance tables, (ii) a body mass index (BMI) equal to or greater than 35 kilograms per meter squared with comorbidity or coexisting medical conditions such as hypertension, cardiopulmonary conditions, sleep apnea, or diabetes, or (iii) a BMI of 40 kilograms per meter squared without such comorbidity. As used herein, "BMI" equals weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared.

19. Include coverage for colorectal cancer screening, specifically screening with an annual fecal occult blood test, flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy, or in appropriate circumstances radiologic imaging, in accordance with the most recently published recommendations established by the American College of Gastroenterology, in consultation with the American Cancer Society, for the ages, family histories, and frequencies referenced in such recommendations. The coverage for colorectal cancer screening shall not be more restrictive than or separate from coverage provided 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 copayments and coinsurance factors.

20. On and after July 1, 2002, require that a prescription benefit card, health insurance benefit card, or other technology that complies with the requirements set forth in § 38.2-3407.4:2 be issued to each employee provided coverage pursuant to this section, and shall upon any changes in the required data elements set forth in subsection A of § 38.2-3407.4:2, either reissue the card or provide employees covered under the plan such corrective information as may be required to electronically process a prescription claim.

21. Include coverage for infant hearing screenings and all necessary audiological examinations provided pursuant to § 32.1-64.1 using any technology approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, and as recommended by the national Joint Committee on Infant Hearing in its most current position statement addressing early hearing detection and intervention programs. Such coverage shall include follow-up audiological examinations as recommended by a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner or audiologist and performed by a licensed audiologist to confirm the existence or absence of hearing loss.

22. Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, every plan established in accordance with this section shall comply with the provisions of § 2.2-2818.2.

C. Claims incurred during a fiscal year but not reported during that fiscal year shall be paid from such funds as shall be appropriated by law. Appropriations, premiums and other payments shall be deposited in the employee health insurance fund, from which payments for claims, premiums, cost containment programs and administrative expenses shall be withdrawn from time to time. The funds of the health insurance fund shall be deemed separate and independent trust funds, shall be segregated from all other funds of the Commonwealth, and shall be invested and administered solely in the interests of the employees and their beneficiaries. Neither the General Assembly nor any public officer, employee, or agency shall use or authorize the use of such trust funds for any purpose other than as provided in law for benefits, refunds, and administrative expenses, including but not limited to legislative oversight of the health insurance fund.

D. For the purposes of this section:

"Part-time state employees" means classified or similarly situated employees in legislative, executive, judicial or independent agencies who are compensated on a salaried basis and work at least 20 hours, but less than 32 hours, per week.

"Peer-reviewed medical literature" means a scientific study published only after having been critically reviewed for scientific accuracy, validity, and reliability by unbiased independent experts in a journal that has been determined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors to have met the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. Peer-reviewed medical literature does not include publications or supplements to publications that are sponsored to a significant extent by a pharmaceutical manufacturing company or health carrier.

"Standard reference compendia" means:

1. American Hospital Formulary Service - Drug Information;
2. National Comprehensive Cancer Network's Drugs & Biologics Compendium; or
3. Elsevier Gold Standard's Clinical Pharmacology.

305 "State employee" means state employee as defined in § 51.1-124.3; employee as defined in  
306 § 51.1-201; the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General; judge as defined in § 51.1-301  
307 and judges, clerks and deputy clerks of regional juvenile and domestic relations, county juvenile and  
308 domestic relations, and district courts of the Commonwealth; and interns and residents employed by the  
309 School of Medicine and Hospital of the University of Virginia, and interns, residents, and employees of  
310 the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority as provided in § 23-50.16:24.

311 E. Provisions shall be made for retired employees to obtain coverage under the above plan,  
312 including, as an option, coverage for vision and dental care. The Commonwealth may, but shall not be  
313 obligated to, pay all or any portion of the cost thereof.

314 F. Any self-insured group health insurance plan established by the Department of Human Resource  
315 Management that utilizes a network of preferred providers shall not exclude any physician solely on the  
316 basis of a reprimand or censure from the Board of Medicine, so long as the physician otherwise meets  
317 the plan criteria established by the Department.

318 G. The plan shall include, in each planning district, at least two health coverage options, each  
319 sponsored by unrelated entities. No later than July 1, 2006, one of the health coverage options to be  
320 available in each planning district shall be a high deductible health plan that would qualify for a health  
321 savings account pursuant to § 223 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

322 In each planning district that does not have an available health coverage alternative, the Department  
323 shall voluntarily enter into negotiations at any time with any health coverage provider who seeks to  
324 provide coverage under the plan.

325 This subsection shall not apply to any state agency authorized by the Department to establish and  
326 administer its own health insurance coverage plan separate from the plan established by the Department.

327 H. Any self-insured group health insurance plan established by the Department of Human Resource  
328 Management that includes coverage for prescription drugs on an outpatient basis may apply a formulary  
329 to the prescription drug benefits provided by the plan if the formulary is developed, reviewed at least  
330 annually, and updated as necessary in consultation with and with the approval of a pharmacy and  
331 therapeutics committee, a majority of whose members are actively practicing licensed (i) pharmacists,  
332 (ii) physicians, and (iii) other health care providers.

333 If the plan maintains one or more drug formularies, the plan shall establish a process to allow a  
334 person to obtain, without additional cost-sharing beyond that provided for formulary prescription drugs  
335 in the plan, a specific, medically necessary nonformulary prescription drug if, after reasonable  
336 investigation and consultation with the prescriber, the formulary drug is determined to be an  
337 inappropriate therapy for the medical condition of the person. The plan shall act on such requests within  
338 one business day of receipt of the request.

339 Any plan established in accordance with this section shall be authorized to provide for the selection  
340 of a single mail order pharmacy provider as the exclusive provider of pharmacy services that are  
341 delivered to the covered person's address by mail, common carrier, or delivery service. As used in this  
342 subsection, "mail order pharmacy provider" means a pharmacy permitted to conduct business in the  
343 Commonwealth whose primary business is to dispense a prescription drug or device under a prescriptive  
344 drug order and to deliver the drug or device to a patient primarily by mail, common carrier, or delivery  
345 service.

346 I. Any plan established in accordance with this section requiring preauthorization prior to rendering  
347 medical treatment shall have personnel available to provide authorization at all times when such  
348 preauthorization is required.

349 J. Any plan established in accordance with this section shall provide to all covered employees written  
350 notice of any benefit reductions during the contract period at least 30 days before such reductions  
351 become effective.

352 K. No contract between a provider and any plan established in accordance with this section shall  
353 include provisions that require a health care provider or health care provider group to deny covered  
354 services that such provider or group knows to be medically necessary and appropriate that are provided  
355 with respect to a covered employee with similar medical conditions.

356 L. The Department of Human Resource Management shall appoint an Ombudsman to promote and  
357 protect the interests of covered employees under any state employee's health plan.

358 The Ombudsman shall:

359 1. Assist covered employees in understanding their rights and the processes available to them  
360 according to their state health plan.

361 2. Answer inquiries from covered employees by telephone and electronic mail.

362 3. Provide to covered employees information concerning the state health plans.

363 4. Develop information on the types of health plans available, including benefits and complaint  
364 procedures and appeals.

365 5. Make available, either separately or through an existing Internet web site utilized by the  
366 Department of Human Resource Management, information as set forth in subdivision 4 and such

additional information as he deems appropriate.

6. Maintain data on inquiries received, the types of assistance requested, any actions taken and the disposition of each such matter.

7. Upon request, assist covered employees in using the procedures and processes available to them from their health plan, including all appeal procedures. Such assistance may require the review of health care records of a covered employee, which shall be done only in accordance with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act privacy rules. The confidentiality of any such medical records shall be maintained in accordance with the confidentiality and disclosure laws of the Commonwealth.

8. Ensure that covered employees have access to the services provided by the Ombudsman and that the covered employees receive timely responses from the Ombudsman or his representatives to the inquiries.

9. Report annually on his activities to the standing committees of the General Assembly having jurisdiction over insurance and over health and the Joint Commission on Health Care by December 1 of each year.

M. The plan established in accordance with this section shall not refuse to accept or make reimbursement pursuant to an assignment of benefits made to a dentist or oral surgeon by a covered employee.

For purposes of this subsection, "assignment of benefits" means the transfer of dental care coverage reimbursement benefits or other rights under the plan. The assignment of benefits shall not be effective until the covered employee notifies the plan in writing of the assignment.

N. Beginning July 1, 2006, any plan established pursuant to this section shall provide for an identification number, which shall be assigned to the covered employee and shall not be the same as the employee's social security number.

O. Any group health insurance plan established by the Department of Human Resource Management that contains a coordination of benefits provision shall provide written notification to any eligible employee as a prominent part of its enrollment materials that if such eligible employee is covered under another group accident and sickness insurance policy, group accident and sickness subscription contract, or group health care plan for health care services, that insurance policy, subscription contract or health care plan may have primary responsibility for the covered expenses of other family members enrolled with the eligible employee. Such written notification shall describe generally the conditions upon which the other coverage would be primary for dependent children enrolled under the eligible employee's coverage and the method by which the eligible enrollee may verify from the plan that coverage would have primary responsibility for the covered expenses of each family member.

P. Any plan established by the Department of Human Resource Management pursuant to this section shall provide that coverage under such plan for family members enrolled under a participating state employee's coverage shall continue for a period of at least 30 days following the death of such state employee.

Q. The plan established in accordance with this section that follows a policy of sending its payment to the covered employee or covered family member for a claim for services received from a nonparticipating physician or osteopath shall (i) include language in the member handbook that notifies the covered employee of the responsibility to apply the plan payment to the claim from such nonparticipating provider, (ii) include this language with any such payment sent to the covered employee or covered family member, and (iii) include the name and any last known address of the nonparticipating provider on the explanation of benefits statement.

R. The Department of Human Resource Management shall report annually, by November 30 of each year in which a mandate is imposed under the provisions of § 2.2-2818.2, to the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits established pursuant to Article 2 (§ 2.2-2503 et seq.) of Chapter 25, on cost and utilization information for each of the mandated benefits set forth in subsection B, including any mandated benefit made applicable, pursuant to subdivision B 22, to any plan established pursuant to this section. The report shall be in the same detail and form as required of reports submitted pursuant to § 38.2-3419.1, with such additional information as is required to determine the financial impact, including the costs and benefits, of the particular mandated benefit.

#### **§ 30-58.1. Powers and duties of Commission.**

The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

A. 1. Make performance reviews of operations of state agencies to ascertain that sums appropriated have been, or are being expended for the purposes for which such appropriations were made and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in accomplishing legislative intent;

B. 2. Study on a continuing basis the operations, practices and duties of state agencies, as they relate to efficiency in the utilization of space, personnel, equipment and facilities;

C. 3. Make such special studies and reports of the operations and functions of state agencies as it

428 deems appropriate and as may be requested by the General Assembly; and

429 ~~D. Assess, analyze, and evaluate the social and economic costs and benefits of any proposed~~  
430 ~~mandated health insurance benefit or mandated provider, including, but not limited to, the mandate's~~  
431 ~~predicted effect on health care coverage premiums and related costs, net costs or savings to the health~~  
432 ~~care system, and other relevant issues, and report its findings with respect to the proposed mandate to~~  
433 ~~the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits; and~~

434 ~~E. 4. Make such reports on its findings and recommendations at such time and in such manner as the~~  
435 ~~Commission deems proper submitting same to the agencies concerned, to the Governor and to the~~  
436 ~~General Assembly. Such reports as are submitted shall relate to the following matters:~~

437 ~~1. a. Ways in which the agencies may operate more economically and efficiently;~~

438 ~~2. b. Ways in which agencies can provide better services to the Commonwealth and to the people;~~  
439 ~~and~~

440 ~~3. c. Areas in which functions of state agencies are duplicative, overlapping, or failing to accomplish~~  
441 ~~legislative objectives or for any other reason should be redefined or redistributed.~~

#### 442 CHAPTER 53.

#### 443 HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM COMMISSION.

#### 444 § 30-339. *Health Reform Insurance Commission established; membership; terms.*

445 *A. The Health Insurance Reform Commission (the Commission) is established in the legislative*  
446 *branch of state government.*

447 *B. The Commission shall consist of 14 members that include eight legislative members, four*  
448 *nonlegislative citizen members, and two ex officio members as follows: three members of the House*  
449 *Committee on Commerce and Labor and two members of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and*  
450 *Institutions appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of*  
451 *proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the*  
452 *Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor and one member of the Senate Committee on Education and*  
453 *Health appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; four nonlegislative citizen members appointed by*  
454 *the Governor that include one representative of small business, one representative of a large business,*  
455 *one representative of health care providers, and one representatives of the accident and health*  
456 *insurance industry; and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Commissioner of*  
457 *Insurance, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen*  
458 *members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.*

459 *C. Legislative members and ex officio members of the Commission shall serve terms coincident with*  
460 *their terms of office. Nonlegislative citizen members shall serve terms of four years. Appointments to fill*  
461 *vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled*  
462 *in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed.*

463 *D. The Commission annually shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership,*  
464 *who shall be members of the General Assembly.*

#### 465 § 30-340. *Quorum; meetings; voting on recommendations.*

466 *A. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Commission shall be*  
467 *held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.*

468 *B. No recommendation of the Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a*  
469 *majority of the House members appointed to the Commission (i) vote against the recommendation and*  
470 *(ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the Commission.*

#### 471 § 30-341. *Compensation; expenses.*

472 *Legislative members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12,*  
473 *and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties*  
474 *as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses*  
475 *incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. However, all such*  
476 *compensation and expenses shall be paid from existing appropriations to the Commission, or, if*  
477 *underfunded, shall be approved by the Joint Rules Committee. Unless otherwise approved in writing by*  
478 *the chairman of the Commission, the Clerk of the Senate, and the Clerk of the House of Delegates,*  
479 *nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the*  
480 *Commonwealth for the purpose of attending meetings.*

#### 481 § 30-342. *Powers and duties.*

482 *The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:*

483 *1. Monitor the work of appropriate federal and state agencies in implementing the provisions of the*  
484 *federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, including amendments thereto and regulations*  
485 *promulgated thereunder (the Act);*

486 *2. Assess the implications of the Act's implementation on residents of the Commonwealth, businesses*  
487 *operating within the Commonwealth, and the general fund of the Commonwealth;*

488 *3. Consider the recommendations of the Virginia Health Reform Initiative to the Governor regarding*  
489 *the development of a comprehensive strategy for implementing health reform in Virginia, including*



recommendations for innovative health care solutions independent of the approach embodied in the Act that meet the needs of Virginia's citizens and government by creating an improved health system that will serve as an economic driver for the Commonwealth while allowing for more effective and efficient delivery of high quality care at lower cost;

4. Determine whether, when, and under what conditions the Commonwealth should establish a state-run health benefit exchange, partner with the federal government to implement a health benefit exchange, or acquiesce in the establishment of a federally operated health benefit exchange within Virginia;

5. Recommend what health benefits should be required to be included within the scope of the essential health benefits provided under health insurance products offered in the Commonwealth, including any benefits that are not required to be provided by the terms of the Act; and

6. Develop such recommendations as may be appropriate for legislative and administrative consideration in order to increase access to health insurance coverage, ensure that the costs to business and individual purchasers of health insurance coverage are reasonable, and encourage a robust market for health insurance products in the Commonwealth.

**§ 30-343. Staffing.**

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate or the Office of Clerk of the House of Delegates as may be appropriate for the house in which the chairman of the Commission serves. The Bureau of Insurance of the State Corporation Commission and such other state agencies as may be considered appropriate by the Commission shall provide staff assistance to the Commission. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

**§ 30-344. Chairman's executive summary of activity and work of the Commission.**

The chairman of the Commission shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Commission no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

**§ 30-345. Sunset.**

This chapter shall expire on July 1, 2017.

**§ 38.2-3431. Application of article; definitions.**

A. This article applies to group health plans and to health insurance issuers offering group health insurance coverage, and individual policies offered to employees of small employers.

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 or multiple employer welfare arrangement providing health care plans for health care services that offers individual or group coverage to the small employer market in this Commonwealth shall be subject to the provisions of this article. Any issuer of individual coverage to employees of a small employer shall be subject to the provisions of this article if any of the following conditions are met:

1. Any portion of the premiums or benefits is paid by or on behalf of the employer;

2. The eligible employee or dependent is reimbursed, whether through wage adjustments or otherwise, by or on behalf of the employer for any portion of the premium;

3. The employer has permitted payroll deduction for the covered individual and any portion of the premium is paid by the employer, provided that the health insurance issuer providing individual coverage under such circumstances shall be registered as a health insurance issuer in the small group market under this article, and shall have offered small employer group insurance to the employer in the manner required under this article; or

4. The health benefit plan is treated by the employer or any of the covered individuals as part of a plan or program for the purpose of §§ 106, 125, or 162 of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

B. For the purposes of this article:

"Actuarial certification" means a written statement by a member of the American Academy of Actuaries or other individual acceptable to the Commission that a health insurance issuer is in compliance with the provisions of this article based upon the person's examination, including a review of the appropriate records and of the actuarial assumptions and methods used by the health insurance issuer in establishing premium rates for applicable insurance coverage.

"Affiliation period" means a period which, under the terms of the health insurance coverage offered by a health maintenance organization, must expire before the health insurance coverage becomes effective. The health maintenance organization is not required to provide health care services or benefits during such period and no premium shall be charged to the participant or beneficiary for any coverage

551 during the period.

552 1. Such period shall begin on the enrollment date.

553 2. An affiliation period under a plan shall run concurrently with any waiting period under the plan.

554 "Beneficiary" has the meaning given such term under section 3(8) of the Employee Retirement  
555 Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (8)).

556 "Bona fide association" means, with respect to health insurance coverage offered in this  
557 Commonwealth, an association which:

558 1. Has been actively in existence for at least five years;

559 2. Has been formed and maintained in good faith for purposes other than obtaining insurance;

560 3. Does not condition membership in the association on any health status-related factor relating to an  
561 individual (including an employee of an employer or a dependent of an employee);

562 4. Makes health insurance coverage offered through the association available to all members  
563 regardless of any health status-related factor relating to such members (or individuals eligible for  
564 coverage through a member);

565 5. Does not make health insurance coverage offered through the association available other than in  
566 connection with a member of the association; and

567 6. Meets such additional requirements as may be imposed under the laws of this Commonwealth.

568 "Certification" means a written certification of the period of creditable coverage of an individual  
569 under a group health plan and coverage provided by a health insurance issuer offering group health  
570 insurance coverage and the coverage if any under such COBRA continuation provision, and the waiting  
571 period if any and affiliation period if applicable imposed with respect to the individual for any coverage  
572 under such plan.

573 "Church plan" has the meaning given such term under section 3(33) of the Employee Retirement  
574 Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (33)).

575 "COBRA continuation provision" means any of the following:

576 1. Section 4980B of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. § 4980B), other than subsection  
577 (f) (1) of such section insofar as it relates to pediatric vaccines;

578 2. Part 6 of subtitle B of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29  
579 U.S.C. § 1161 et seq.), other than section 609 of such Act; or

580 3. Title XXII of P.L. 104-191.

581 "Community rate" means the average rate charged for the same or similar coverage to all small  
582 employer groups with the same area, age and gender characteristics. This rate shall be based on the  
583 health insurance issuer's combined claims experience for all groups within its small employer market.

584 "Creditable coverage" means with respect to an individual, coverage of the individual under any of  
585 the following:

586 1. A group health plan;

587 2. Health insurance coverage;

588 3. Part A or B of Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1395c or § 1395);

589 4. Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.), other than coverage consisting  
590 solely of benefits under section 1928;

591 5. Chapter 55 of Title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 1071 et seq.);

592 6. A medical care program of the Indian Health Service or of a tribal organization;

593 7. A state health benefits risk pool;

594 8. A health plan offered under Chapter 89 of Title 5, United States Code (5 U.S.C. § 8901 et seq.);

595 9. A public health plan (as defined in federal regulations);

596 10. A health benefit plan under section 5 (e) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2504(e)); or

597 11. Individual health insurance coverage.

598 Such term does not include coverage consisting solely of coverage of excepted benefits.

599 "Dependent" means the spouse or child of an eligible employee, subject to the applicable terms of  
600 the policy, contract or plan covering the eligible employee.

601 "Eligible employee" means an employee who works for a small group employer on a full-time basis,  
602 has a normal work week of 30 or more hours, has satisfied applicable waiting period requirements, and  
603 is not a part-time, temporary or substitute employee.

604 "Eligible individual" means such an individual in relation to the employer as shall be determined:

605 1. In accordance with the terms of such plan;

606 2. As provided by the health insurance issuer under rules of the health insurance issuer which are  
607 uniformly applicable to employers in the group market; and

608 3. In accordance with all applicable law of this Commonwealth governing such issuer and such  
609 market.

610 "Employee" has the meaning given such term under section 3(6) of the Employee Retirement Income  
611 Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (6)).

612 "Employer" has the meaning given such term under section 3(5) of the Employee Retirement Income

Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (5)), except that such term shall include only employers of two or more employees.

"Enrollment date" means, with respect to an eligible individual covered under a group health plan or health insurance coverage, the date of enrollment of the eligible individual in the plan or coverage or, if earlier, the first day of the waiting period for such enrollment.

"Essential and standard health benefit plans" means health benefit plans developed pursuant to subsection C of this section.

"Excepted benefits" means benefits under one or more (or any combination thereof) of the following:

1. Benefits not subject to requirements of this article:
  - a. Coverage only for accident, or disability income insurance, or any combination thereof;
  - b. Coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance;
  - c. Liability insurance, including general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance;
  - d. Workers' compensation or similar insurance;
  - e. Medical expense and loss of income benefits;
  - f. Credit-only insurance;
  - g. Coverage for on-site medical clinics; and
  - h. Other similar insurance coverage, specified in regulations, under which benefits for medical care are secondary or incidental to other insurance benefits.

2. Benefits not subject to requirements of this article if offered separately:

- a. Limited scope dental or vision benefits;
- b. Benefits for long-term care, nursing home care, home health care, community-based care, or any combination thereof; and
- c. Such other similar, limited benefits as are specified in regulations.

3. Benefits not subject to requirements of this article if offered as independent, noncoordinated benefits:

- a. Coverage only for a specified disease or illness; and
  - b. Hospital indemnity or other fixed indemnity insurance.
4. Benefits not subject to requirements of this article if offered as separate insurance policy:
- a. Medicare supplemental health insurance (as defined under section 1882 (g) (1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1395ss (g) (1))); and
  - b. Coverage supplemental to the coverage provided under Chapter 55 of Title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 1071 et seq.); and
  - c. Similar supplemental coverage provided to coverage under a group health plan.

"Federal governmental plan" means a governmental plan established or maintained for its employees by the government of the United States or by an agency or instrumentality of such government.

"Governmental plan" has the meaning given such term under section 3(32) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (32)) and any federal governmental plan.

"Group health insurance coverage" means in connection with a group health plan, health insurance coverage offered in connection with such plan.

"Group health plan" means an employee welfare benefit plan (as defined in section 3 (1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (1)), to the extent that the plan provides medical care and including items and services paid for as medical care to employees or their dependents (as defined under the terms of the plan) directly or through insurance, reimbursement, or otherwise.

"Health benefit plan" means any accident and health insurance policy or certificate, health services plan contract, health maintenance organization subscriber contract, plan provided by a MEWA or plan provided by another benefit arrangement. "Health benefit plan" does not mean accident only, credit, or disability insurance; coverage of Medicare services or federal employee health plans, pursuant to contracts with the United States government; Medicare supplement or long-term care insurance; Medicaid coverage; dental only or vision only insurance; specified disease insurance; hospital confinement indemnity coverage; limited benefit health coverage; coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance; insurance arising out of a workers' compensation or similar law; automobile medical payment insurance; medical expense and loss of income benefits; or insurance under which benefits are payable with or without regard to fault and that is statutorily required to be contained in any liability insurance policy or equivalent self-insurance.

"Health insurance coverage" means benefits consisting of medical care (provided directly, through insurance or reimbursement, or otherwise and including items and services paid for as medical care) under any hospital or medical service policy or certificate, hospital or medical service plan contract, or health maintenance organization contract offered by a health insurance issuer.

"Health insurance issuer" means an insurance company, or insurance organization (including a health maintenance organization) which is licensed to engage in the business of insurance in this

674 Commonwealth and which is subject to the laws of this Commonwealth which regulate insurance within  
675 the meaning of section 514 (b) (2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C.  
676 § 1144 (b) (2)). Such term does not include a group health plan.

677 "Health maintenance organization" means:

- 678 1. A federally qualified health maintenance organization;
- 679 2. An organization recognized under the laws of this Commonwealth as a health maintenance  
680 organization; or
- 681 3. A similar organization regulated under the laws of this Commonwealth for solvency in the same  
682 manner and to the same extent as such a health maintenance organization.

683 "Health status-related factor" means the following in relation to the individual or a dependent eligible  
684 for coverage under a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered by a health insurance  
685 issuer:

- 686 1. Health status;
- 687 2. Medical condition (including both physical and mental illnesses);
- 688 3. Claims experience;
- 689 4. Receipt of health care;
- 690 5. Medical history;
- 691 6. Genetic information;
- 692 7. Evidence of insurability (including conditions arising out of acts of domestic violence); or
- 693 8. Disability.

694 "Individual health insurance coverage" means health insurance coverage offered to individuals in the  
695 individual market, but does not include coverage defined as excepted benefits. Individual health  
696 insurance coverage does not include short-term limited duration coverage.

697 "Individual market" means the market for health insurance coverage offered to individuals other than  
698 in connection with a group health plan.

699 "Large employer" means, in connection with a group health plan or health insurance coverage with  
700 respect to a calendar year and a plan year, an employer who employed an average of at least 51  
701 employees on business days during the preceding calendar year and who employs at least two employees  
702 on the first day of the plan year.

703 "Large group market" means the health insurance market under which individuals obtain health  
704 insurance coverage (directly or through any arrangement) on behalf of themselves (and their dependents)  
705 through a group health plan maintained by a large employer or through a health insurance issuer.

706 "Late enrollee" means, with respect to coverage under a group health plan or health insurance  
707 coverage provided by a health insurance issuer, a participant or beneficiary who enrolls under the plan  
708 other than during:

- 709 1. The first period in which the individual is eligible to enroll under the plan; or
- 710 2. A special enrollment period as required pursuant to subsections J through M of § 38.2-3432.3.

711 "Medical care" means amounts paid for:

- 712 1. The diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, or amounts paid for the  
713 purpose of affecting any structure or function of the body;
- 714 2. Transportation primarily for and essential to medical care referred to in subdivision 1; and
- 715 3. Insurance covering medical care referred to in subdivisions 1 and 2.

716 "Network plan" means health insurance coverage of a health insurance issuer under which the  
717 financing and delivery of medical care (including items and services paid for as medical care) are  
718 provided, in whole or in part, through a defined set of providers under contract with the health insurance  
719 issuer.

720 "Nonfederal governmental plan" means a governmental plan that is not a federal governmental plan.

721 "Participant" has the meaning given such term under section 3(7) of the Employee Retirement  
722 Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (7)).

723 "Placed for adoption," or "placement" or "being placed" for adoption, in connection with any  
724 placement for adoption of a child with any person, means the assumption and retention by such person  
725 of a legal obligation for total or partial support of such child in anticipation of adoption of such child.  
726 The child's placement with such person terminates upon the termination of such legal obligation.

727 "Plan sponsor" has the meaning given such term under section 3(16) (B) of the Employee Retirement  
728 Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1002 (16) (B)).

729 "Preexisting condition exclusion" means, with respect to coverage, a limitation or exclusion of  
730 benefits relating to a condition based on the fact that the condition was present before the date of  
731 enrollment for such coverage, whether or not any medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was  
732 recommended or received before such date. Genetic information shall not be treated as a preexisting  
733 condition in the absence of a diagnosis of the condition related to such information.

734 "Premium" means all moneys paid by an employer and eligible employees as a condition of coverage  
735 from a health insurance issuer, including fees and other contributions associated with the health benefit

plan.

"Rating period" means the 12-month period for which premium rates are determined by a health insurance issuer and are assumed to be in effect.

"Service area" means a broad geographic area of the Commonwealth in which a health insurance issuer sells or has sold insurance policies on or before January 1994, or upon its subsequent authorization to do business in Virginia.

"Small employer" means in connection with a group health plan or health insurance coverage with respect to a calendar year and a plan year, an employer who employed an average of at least two but not more than 50 employees on business days during the preceding calendar year and who employs at least two employees on the first day of the plan year.

"Small group market" means the health insurance market under which individuals obtain health insurance coverage (directly or through any arrangement) on behalf of themselves (and their dependents) through a group health plan maintained by a small employer or through a health insurance issuer.

"State" means each of the several states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

"Waiting period" means, with respect to a group health plan or health insurance coverage provided by a health insurance issuer and an individual who is a potential participant or beneficiary in the plan, the period that must pass with respect to the individual before the individual is eligible to be covered for benefits under the terms of the plan. If an employee or dependent enrolls during a special enrollment period pursuant to subsections J through M of § 38.2-3432.3 or as a late enrollee, any period before such enrollment is not a waiting period.

C. The Commission shall adopt regulations establishing the essential and standard plans for sale in the small employer market. Such regulations shall incorporate the recommendations of the Essential Health Services Panel, established pursuant to Chapter 847 of the 1992 Acts of Assembly. ~~The Commission shall modify such regulations as necessary to incorporate any revisions to the essential and standard plans submitted by the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits pursuant to § 2.2-2503.~~ Every health insurance issuer shall, as a condition of transacting business in Virginia with small employers, offer to small employers the essential and standard plans, subject to the provisions of § 38.2-3432.2. However, any regulation adopted by the Commission shall contain a provision requiring all health insurance issuers to offer an option permitting a small employer electing to be covered under either an essential or standard health benefit plan to choose coverage that does not provide dental benefits. The regulation shall also require a small employer electing such option, as a condition of continuing eligibility for coverage pursuant to this article, to purchase separate dental coverage for all eligible employees and eligible dependents from a dental services plan authorized pursuant to Chapter 45 of this title. All health insurance issuers shall issue the plans to every small employer that elects to be covered under either one of the plans and agrees to make the required premium payments, and shall satisfy the following provisions:

1. Such plan may include cost containment and cost sharing features such as, but not limited to, utilization review of health care services including review of medical necessity of hospital and physician services; case management; selective contracting with hospitals, physicians and other health care providers, subject to the limitations set forth in §§ 38.2-3407 and 38.2-4209 and Chapter 43 (§ 38.2-4300 et seq.) of this title; reasonable benefit differentials applicable to providers that participate or do not participate in arrangements using restricted network provisions; co-payment, co-insurance, deductible or other cost sharing arrangement as those terms are defined in § 38.2-3407.12; or other managed care provisions. The essential and standard plans for health maintenance organizations shall contain benefits and cost-sharing levels which are consistent with the basic method of operation and benefit plans of federally qualified health maintenance organizations, if a health maintenance organization is federally qualified, and of nonfederally qualified health maintenance organizations, if a health maintenance organization is not federally qualified. The essential and standard plans of coverage for health maintenance organizations shall be actuarial equivalents of these plans for health insurance issuers.

2. No law requiring the coverage or offering of coverage of a benefit or provider pursuant to § 38.2-3408 or § 38.2-4221 shall apply to the essential or standard health care plan or riders thereof.

3. Every health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage shall, as a condition of transacting business in Virginia with small employers, offer and make available to small employers an essential and a standard health benefit plan, subject to the provisions of § 38.2-3432.2.

4. All essential and standard benefit plans issued to small employers shall use a policy form approved by the Commission providing coverage defined by the essential and standard benefit plans. Coverages providing benefits greater than and in addition to the essential and standard plans may be provided by rider, separate policy or plan provided that no rider, separate policy or plan shall reduce benefit or premium. A health insurance issuer shall submit all policy forms, including applications,

797 enrollment forms, policies, subscription contracts, certificates, evidences of coverage, riders,  
798 amendments, endorsements and disclosure plans to the Commission for approval in the same manner as  
799 required by § 38.2-316. Each rider, separate policy or plan providing benefits greater than the essential  
800 and standard benefit plans may require a specific premium for the benefits provided in such rider,  
801 separate policy or plan. The premium for such riders shall be determined in the same manner as the  
802 premiums are determined for the essential and standard plans. The Commission at any time may, after  
803 providing notice and an opportunity for a hearing to a health insurance issuer, disapprove the continued  
804 use by the health insurance issuer of an essential or standard health benefit plan on the grounds that  
805 such plan does not meet the requirements of this article.

806 5. No health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage is required to offer coverage  
807 or accept applications pursuant to subdivisions 3 and 4 of this subsection:

808 a. From a small employer already covered under a health benefit plan except for coverage that is to  
809 commence on the group's anniversary date, but this subsection shall not be construed to prohibit a group  
810 from seeking coverage or a health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage from  
811 issuing coverage to a group prior to its anniversary date; or

812 b. If the Commission determines that acceptance of an application or applications would result in the  
813 health insurance issuer being declared an impaired insurer.

814 A health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage that does not offer coverage  
815 pursuant to subdivision 5 b may not offer coverage to small employers until the Commission determines  
816 that the health insurance issuer is no longer impaired.

817 6. Every health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage shall uniformly apply the  
818 provisions of subdivision C 5 of this section and shall fairly market the essential and standard health  
819 benefit plans to all small employers in their service area of the Commonwealth. A health insurance  
820 issuer offering group health insurance coverage that fails to fairly market as required by this subdivision  
821 may not offer coverage in the Commonwealth to new small employers until the later of 180 days after  
822 the unfair marketing has been identified and proven to the Commission or the date on which the health  
823 insurance issuer submits and the Commission approves a plan to fairly market to the health insurance  
824 issuer's service area.

825 7. No health maintenance organization is required to offer coverage or accept applications pursuant to  
826 subdivisions 3 and 4 of this subsection in the case of any of the following:

827 a. To small employers, where the policy would not be delivered or issued for delivery in the health  
828 maintenance organization's approved service areas;

829 b. To an employee, where the employee does not reside or work within the health maintenance  
830 organization's approved service areas;

831 c. To small employers if the health maintenance organization is a federally qualified health  
832 maintenance organization and it demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commission that the federally  
833 qualified health maintenance organization is prevented from doing so by federal requirement; however,  
834 any such exemption under this subdivision would be limited to the essential plan; or

835 d. Within an area where the health maintenance organization demonstrates to the satisfaction of the  
836 Commission, that it will not have the capacity within that area and its network of providers to deliver  
837 services adequately to the enrollees of those groups because of its obligations to existing group contract  
838 holders and enrollees. A health maintenance organization that does not offer coverage pursuant to this  
839 subdivision may not offer coverage in the applicable area to new employer groups with more than 50  
840 eligible employees until the later of 180 days after closure to new applications or the date on which the  
841 health maintenance organization notifies the Commission that it has regained capacity to deliver services  
842 to small employers. In the case of a health maintenance organization doing business in the small  
843 employer market in one service area of this Commonwealth, the rules set forth in this subdivision shall  
844 apply to the health maintenance organization's operations in the service area, unless the provisions of  
845 subdivision 6 of this subsection apply.

846 8. In order to ensure the broadest availability of health benefit plans to small employers, the  
847 Commission shall set market conduct and other requirements for health insurance issuers, agents and  
848 third-party administrators, including requirements relating to the following:

849 a. Registration by each health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage with the  
850 Commission of its intention to offer health insurance coverage in the small group market under this  
851 article;

852 b. Publication by the Commission of a list of all health insurance issuers who offer coverage in the  
853 small group market, including a potential requirement applicable to agents, third-party administrators,  
854 and health insurance issuers that no health benefit plan may be sold to a small employer by a health  
855 insurance issuer not so identified as a health insurance issuer in the small group market;

856 c. The availability of a broadly publicized toll-free telephone number for the Commission's Bureau of  
857 Insurance for access by small employers to information concerning this article;

858 d. To the extent deemed to be necessary to ensure the fair distribution of small employers among

carriers, periodic reports by health insurance issuers about plans issued to small employers; provided that reporting requirements shall be limited to information concerning case characteristics and numbers of health benefit plans in various categories marketed or issued to small employers. Health insurance issuers shall maintain data relating to the essential and standard benefit plans separate from data relating to additional benefits made available by rider for the purpose of complying with the reporting requirements of this section; and

e. Methods concerning periodic demonstration by health insurance issuers offering group health insurance coverage that they are marketing and issuing health benefit plans to small employers in fulfillment of the purposes of this article.

9. All essential and standard health benefits plans contracts delivered, issued for delivery, reissued, renewed, or extended in this Commonwealth on or after July 1, 1997, shall include coverage for 365 days of inpatient hospitalization for each covered individual during a 12-month period. If coverage under the essential or standard health benefits plan terminates while a covered person is hospitalized, the inpatient hospital benefits shall continue to be provided until the earliest of (i) the day the maximum amount of benefit has been provided or (ii) the day the covered person is no longer hospitalized as an inpatient.

2. That Article 2 (§§ 2.2-2503, 2.2-2504, and 2.2-2505) of Chapter 25 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.