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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6310 (as amended by House "A")\******AN ACT CONCERNING CONTRACTS WITH OPHTHALMOLOGISTS AND OPTOMETRISTS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires an HMO or preferred provider network (PPN) that provides benefits for ophthalmologic and optometric services to provide ophthalmologists (licensed physicians specializing in ophthalmology) and optometrists equal access to all health plans and policies it offers. It prohibits an HMO or health insurer contracting with a PPN from restricting participation in a plan or policy based on the service limitations of individual optometrists or ophthalmologists. It also specifies that providing equal access to all health plans and policies does not permit any such provider to perform or provide services outside of his or her scope of practice.

Current law requires an HMO or PPN providing ophthalmologic care benefits to also provide optometric care. If ophthalmologic care can be legally provided by an optometrist, then the HMO or PPN must provide the same eye care coverage and benefits for services they perform. HMOs and PPNs must contract with both types of specialists in a fair and sufficient manner and equally inform enrollees of the availability of ophthalmologic and optometric services.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) changes the effective date from October 1, 2011 to January 1, 2012, (2) expands the bill's applicability to include PPNs instead of only HMOs, and (3) makes technical corrections.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2012

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14 Nay 6 (03/15/2011)