OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 1053

AN ACT EXPANDING MEDICAID AND HUSKY B COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide state-funded medical assistance, starting July 1, 2019, to people under age 19 who (1) are not naturalized citizens regardless of whether they are a “qualified alien” (see BACKGROUND) and (2) have a household income at or below 196% of the federal poverty limit (FPL). (This would, presumably, include qualified aliens eligible for Medicaid under existing law.)

The bill extends to this group provisions in existing law requiring medical assistance programs to provide (1) certain benefits under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment program, (2) written notice to applicants advising them on eligibility aspects of the program and availability of other services, and (3) written notice for ineligible applicants.

The bill also expands HUSKY B coverage. In practice, HUSKY B is the program through which DSS distributes federal Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) benefits. Current law allows HUSKY B to cover children with household incomes between 196% FPL and 318% FPL. The bill (1) requires, rather than allows, HUSKY B to cover this group and (2) expands the group to include children regardless of their legal immigration status. Under federal law, CHIP coverage is generally available to certain lawfully present immigrants and unavailable to undocumented immigrants.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Qualified Aliens
Under federal law, qualified aliens include:

1. legal (lawful) permanent residents;

2. asylees or refugees;

3. those paroled (one-time entry into the U.S. for a specific purpose, such as medical treatment) for at least one year or whose deportation is being withheld;

4. those granted conditional entry before April 1, 1980;

5. battered spouses or children, or the children or parents, respectively, of these individuals; or

6. certain Cuban, Haitian, Ameriasian, Iraqi, and Afghan entrants (8 U.S.C. § 1641(b)).

Federal law generally subjects certain qualified aliens to an additional five year residency requirement in order to be eligible for federal means-tested benefits including Medicaid. For children and pregnant women, states can waive the five-year wait and extend coverage to lawfully present immigrants without a qualified status (42 U.S.C. 1396b(v)(4)(A)).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 11  Nay 7  (03/21/2019)