

One Hundred Fourth Legislature - Second Session - 2016

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB782

Chairperson: Senator Kathy Campbell

Committee: Health and Human Services

Date of Hearing: February 18, 2016

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB782 proposes to increase access to family planning services through the State's Medicaid program and increase access to cancer and other chronic disease screening services through the Every Woman Matters Program, both of which serve primarily low income women who do not have health care insurance.

Family Planning Services

Federal law requires State Medicaid programs to furnish family planning services and supplies to eligible individuals of childbearing age. In Nebraska Medicaid family planning services are available to non-pregnant woman whose income is 57 percent or below the Federal poverty level. States are reimbursed for their share of the costs at a 90 percent Federal rate, a higher level than for most other Medicaid services.

LB782 would require the State to seek an amendment to the Medicaid State Plan to extend Medicaid funded family planning services non-pregnant women who are otherwise ineligible for full Medicaid coverage and it would change income eligibility for family planning services from 57 percent of the Federal Poverty level to 185 percent. This is an option that has been available to States for over 10 years and is designed to extend eligibility to mostly adult women, who otherwise are ineligible for full Medicaid coverage.

Over 25 states have adopted the option and report that the cost of providing family planning services to individuals under the program is lower than the cost of providing care to women with unintended pregnancies. It is estimated that Nebraska would save over \$11 million in General Funds and over \$7 million in Federal Funds annually by increasing access to family planning services for low income women.

Every Woman Matters Program

The Every Woman Matters program in Nebraska is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The programs is designed to provide low income women access to screening for and early detection of breast cancer, cervical cancer, other chronic diseases, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases. The Program does not deliver family planning services.

Screening services are available to low income women between the ages of 40 and 74, whose income levels are at or below 225 percent of the Federal poverty level, and who are uninsured and do not qualify for Medicaid. The Department verifies applicant eligibility and allocates money to participating providers. Women requiring further treatment beyond initial testing and diagnostics are referred to other health care programs for low income people, all of which have their own set of income eligibility guidelines.

LB782 would authorize a \$1 million appropriation over a two year period to the Every Woman Matters Program and would authorize state funds be used for education and outreach. The funds could also be used to leverage other federal funds. While the bill addresses the Every Woman Matters Program separate from the Medicaid family planning services program, the \$1 million appropriation would be easily absorb due to the over \$11 million savings associated with increasing access to family planning services.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Paul Schumacher