

AUTISM COVERAGE FUND

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Senate Bill 137 as Passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Senator Dave Hildenbrand
Committee: Appropriations

Complete to 3-3-2015

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 137 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 2-26-15

Senate Bill 137 revises section 8 of the Autism Coverage Reimbursement Act (2012 PA 101), under which the Autism Coverage Fund is established. The Fund supports reimbursements paid to private health insurance carriers for claims associated with the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Under current law, for fiscal year 2014-15 only, up to \$5.5 million from the Fund may be appropriated and expended for university autism programs and autism family assistance services.

Under the bill, the amount is revised to up to \$8.5 million that may be expended for university autism programs and autism family assistance services for FY 2014-15 only.

FISCAL IMPACT

To address revenue shortfalls, the Legislature passed Enrolled House Bill 4112 supplemental appropriations for FY 2014-15 which includes a net \$0 gross fund shift of \$3.0 million of the one-time appropriations for university autism programs from GF/GP funding to the Autism Coverage Fund, in the Department of Community Health (DCH) budget.

The Fund is projected to have sufficient balance available to support this appropriation in addition to reimbursements pursuant to 2012 PA 101 throughout FY 2014-15. The current balance of the Fund is \$13.2 million, which would be reduced to \$10.2 million with enactment of SB 137. If the bill is not enacted, \$3.0 million of the appropriations in the enacted DCH budget for university autism programs will not be available for expenditure.

Projections discussed by the Department of Insurance and Financial Services, which assume total monthly reimbursements averaging \$800,000, estimate that money within the Fund will be exhausted by the spring of 2016, or several months earlier if SB 137 is enacted. However, whether the monthly reimbursements have stabilized or will continue to escalate is currently unknown, accordingly this estimate is subject to significant uncertainty.

Pursuant to 2012 PA 101, reimbursements shall only be approved and paid if there is sufficient money within the Fund. Consequently, the ACRP would ostensibly cease operation (although the autism coverage mandate enacted by 2012 PA 100 would remain in effect) unless or until the Legislature appropriates additional money to the Fund prior to exhaustion of money within the Fund.

University autism programs have received Funding since FY 2011-12 to support development of education and treatment programs for persons with autism, and development of education programs to build the workforce of health care professionals trained to assess, diagnose and provide treatment services for persons with autism spectrum disorders.

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