
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DISCOURAGING THE PRACTICE OF CREATING AND USING SPECIALTY TIERS
FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN HEALTH PLANS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has long been a leader in ensuring
2 affordable access to health care for its citizens; and
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4 WHEREAS, health plans across the country have begun to
5 create specialty tiers for certain prescription drugs that
6 require patients to pay either a much higher copayment or a
7 percentage of the cost of the drug instead of a copayment; and
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9 WHEREAS, these specialty drugs are typically new,
10 infusible, or injectible biologics or plasma-derived therapies
11 produced in lesser quantities; and
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13 WHEREAS, many of these specialty drugs are used to treat
14 transplant patients and conditions such as cancer; autoimmune
15 conditions, such as Crohn's diseases, lupus, multiple sclerosis,
16 myasthenia gravis, myositis, scleroderma, and rheumatoid
17 arthritis; hemophilia and other bleeding disorders; hepatitis;
18 primary and secondary immune deficiencies; and neuropathy; and
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20 WHEREAS, high out-of-pocket costs for specialty drugs could
21 preclude patients from complying with the treatment protocols
22 prescribed by their doctors and force patients to choose between
23 paying for basic living expenses and taking their medications;
24 and
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26 WHEREAS, the health of patients who are unable to afford to
27 take the specialty medicines prescribed by their doctors will
28 further deteriorate, often necessitating more expensive
29 emergency care or forcing them to go on disability, resulting in
30 additional costs to the State; and
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32 WHEREAS, the practice of specialty tiers violates the basic
33 principle of insurance whereby individuals and groups purchase



1 health insurance plans so that they are protected from the risk
2 of needing to pay for expensive medical treatments; and

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4 WHEREAS, specialty tiers create a structure where those who
5 are sickest pay more and those who are healthiest pay less; and

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7 WHEREAS, specialty tiers will not keep health care costs
8 down because there are no alternatives to these medications, and
9 specialty tiers only serve as a barrier to treatment for
10 chronically ill patients; now, therefore,

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12 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-sixth
13 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2011, the
14 House of Representatives concurring, that the practice of
15 creating and using specialty tiers for prescription drugs in
16 health plans is discouraged and should be avoided and eliminated
17 wherever possible; and

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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
20 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director
21 of Health, Director of Human Services, Director of Labor and
22 Industrial Relations, and Insurance Commissioner, who in turn is
23 requested to transmit copies to each insurer in the State that
24 issues health insurance policies.

