

Date of Hearing: August 26, 2021

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

SB 48 (Limón) – As Amended August 16, 2021

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill adds an annual cognitive assessment as a covered Medi-Cal benefit for a beneficiary 65 years old or older if the beneficiary is otherwise ineligible for a similar assessment as part of an annual wellness visit under the Medicare Program.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Conditions provider reimbursement on completion of specified training and the provider's use of a validated assessment tool, as specified.
- 2) Requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to consolidate and analyze assessment data in the Medi-Cal managed care and fee-for-service delivery systems.
- 3) Requires any necessary federal approvals and financial participation for implementation and requires an appropriation for provider reimbursement.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

DHCS was unable to provide fiscal information for this bill. While the number of individuals eligible for the new benefit may be less than 200,000, the combination of a new benefit plus requirements related to the screening tool and oversight for provider reimbursement could exceed \$150,000.

**COMMENTS:**

**Purpose.** According to the author's office, this bill creates an innovative program to give Medi-Cal providers training, validated assessment tools, and payment incentives for conducting cognitive health assessments in order to achieve the statewide goal of improved Alzheimer's detection and diagnosis.

**Background.** The federal Medicare program, providing health coverage primarily to individuals 65 and older, includes cognitive screening as part of an annual wellness visit. Data from May 2021 indicates there were approximately 183,000 seniors 65 and older receiving Medi-Cal but not Medicare. DHCS data shows almost 14 million individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal in June 2021.

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