

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

April 10, 2007 5:21 p.m. PT

Health Care: Bill is too narrow

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER EDITORIAL BOARD

While trying with some success to respond to the governor's Healthy Washington Initiative, legislators quietly have moved forward a bill that undercuts their own efforts. Gov. Chris Gregoire must be ready to veto a measure unjustifiably benefiting one group of medical practitioners.

Chiropractors are supporting SB5597, which would unnecessarily give them a pass from part of providers' controls on quality and efficiency. Under the bill, health insurers would have to cover treatment by all members of a chiropractic group if the plan contracts with any members of the group.

We don't doubt that practices sometimes run into billing problems, but surely there are other ways to resolve the issue without a one-size-fits-all mandate. More important, this has little or nothing to do with expanding access to care, the thrust of Gregoire's effort and what should be the all-consuming focus for the Legislature.

Piecemeal changes to a system in need of comprehensive reform are a distraction, and an expensive one at that. Margaret Stanley of the [Puget Sound Health Alliance](#) said the proposal moves away from the emphasis on informing consumers, promoting efficiency and improving quality her wide-ranging group promotes.

Steve Hill of the state [Health Care Authority](#) said there's no shortage of insurance-covered chiropractic care for consumers. Thank liberal state laws on covering all types of treatment. But the extra expenses of further expanding treatment in one area will detract from the real need, which is to provide basic coverage for more children and working adults. The governor should have a pen handy.