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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 7103**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE KATIE BECKETT WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop a five-year plan to eliminate the waiting list for the Katie Beckett Waiver Program and add home modification coverage as a service offered through the program. The Katie Beckett program is a Medicaid waiver that allows children with severe physical disabilities to be eligible for Medicaid home- and community-based care. According to DSS, 331 people are currently on the waitlist.

The bill lowers the maximum age for Katie Beckett participants from 21 to 18. (At age 18, people in this group become eligible for coverage under a different Medicaid program.)

The bill also establishes outreach and reporting requirements for the Katie Beckett program, including a website, a brochure, and a requirement that DSS provide information on the program, including eligibility criteria, at least annually to Medicaid-enrolled providers through the department's provider bulletin.

Lastly, the bill requires the DSS commissioner to report by October 1, 2025, to the Appropriations and Human Services committees on recommended state appropriations needed to implement the plan to eliminate the waitlist and add home modification coverage as a program service.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon passage, except the change to the maximum participant age is effective July 1, 2025.

## **OUTREACH**

### ***Website and Portal***

The bill requires the DSS commissioner to establish a Katie Beckett Waiver Program website by September 1, 2025, that includes a portal that allows a person to (1) login; (2) undergo an initial eligibility screening process to determine whether the waiver program is the most appropriate program to meet the person's needs; and (3) receive periodic updates on waitlist rank, estimated time to receive waiver services, and whether the person remains eligible for the program.

The bill requires the website to also include the following information:

1. eligibility criteria for the waiver program, including any income or asset limits;
2. a summary of services available under the program;
3. contact information for family support groups and advocacy groups for children and young adults with severe debilitating diseases or conditions;
4. help available to determine private insurance coverage for services for children and young adults with these conditions, including a link to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate's website;
5. a list of other Medicaid waiver programs or Medicaid state plan services for this population, including eligibility criteria for these programs; and
6. a list of private organizations and state programs that may offer funding for home modifications or adaptive equipment for people with disabilities, including a link to the Department of Aging and Disability Services's website for information on adaptive equipment purchases and assistive technology loans.

**Brochure**

The bill requires the DSS commissioner to create a brochure with information on and eligibility criteria for the Katie Beckett Waiver Program. Under the bill, she must distribute the brochure to medical providers by September 1, 2025, including children's hospitals, geneticists, nurses, and social workers.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22    Nay 0    (03/13/2025)