

HEALTH INSURERS - REFERRAL TO SPECIALIST PROCESS

2000 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Sponsor: Mary Carlson

AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE; REQUIRING AN INSURER TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR STANDING REFERRALS TO HEALTH CARE SPECIALISTS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This act affects sections of Utah Code Annotated 1953 as follows:

ENACTS:

31A-22-625, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **31A-22-625** is enacted to read:

31A-22-625. Standing referral to a specialist.

(1) With respect to a health insurance policy or health maintenance organization contract that does not allow an insured to have direct access to a health care specialist, the insurer shall establish and implement a procedure by which an insured may obtain a standing referral to a health care specialist.

(2) The procedure established under Subsection (1):

(a) shall provide for a standing referral to a specialist if the insured's primary care provider determines, in consultation with the specialist, that the insured needs continuing care from the specialist; and

(b) may require the insurer's approval of a treatment plan designed by the specialist, in consultation with the primary care provider and the insured, which may include:

(i) a limit on the number of visits to the specialist;

(ii) a time limit on the duration of the referral; and

(iii) mandatory updates on the insured's condition.

Section 2. **Effective date.**

This act takes effect on July 1, 2000.