

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2007

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007—08 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 770**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Hernandez**

February 22, 2007

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An act relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 770, as amended, Hernandez. Health care coverage: agricultural employees.

Existing law does not provide a system of health care coverage for all California residents and does not require employers to provide health care coverage for employees and their families, other than coverage provided as part of the workers' compensation system for work-related employee injuries. Existing law provides for the creation of various programs to provide health care services to persons who have limited incomes and meet various eligibility requirements. These programs include the Healthy Families Program administered by the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, and the Medi-Cal program administered by the State Department of Health Care Services. Existing law provides for the regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care and health insurers by the Department of Insurance.

This bill would state various findings regarding health care coverage and would declare the intent of the Legislature that agricultural employees be provided health care coverage and that agricultural employers offering that coverage be allowed to lower their total health care costs.

*This bill would also require the Senate Office of Research to conduct a comprehensive study of, among other things, the availability of health care coverage to agricultural employees, to convene a working group of affected California stakeholders, and to report to the Legislature by January 1, 2009, with recommendations to ensure that agricultural employees in California are provided health care coverage and that agricultural employers who provide health care coverage to their employees are allowed to lower their health care costs.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
 State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
- 2 Agricultural Employer and Employee Health Care Coverage Act
- 3 of 2007.
- 4 SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:
- 5 (a) Control of health care costs can be more readily achieved
- 6 by providing health care coverage to a larger share of working
- 7 people and their families, thereby minimizing the shifting of health
- 8 care costs.
- 9 (b) The social and economic problems created by the lack of
- 10 health care coverage for some workers and their dependents creates
- 11 a burden on employers, on the state, on affected workers, and on
- 12 the families of affected workers who suffer ill-health and risk
- 13 financial ruin.
- 14 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that agricultural employees
- 15 in California be provided health care coverage.
- 16 (d) It is also the intent of the Legislature to ensure that
- 17 agricultural employers who provide qualified health care coverage
- 18 to their employees be allowed to lower their total health care costs.
- 19 SEC. 3. (a) (1) *The Senate Office of Research shall conduct*
- 20 *a comprehensive study on all of the following:*
- 21 (A) *The availability of health care coverage to agricultural*
- 22 *employees in California.*
- 23 (B) *Methods to increase access to health care coverage for*
- 24 *agricultural employees.*
- 25 (C) *Ways to lower the health care costs paid by agricultural*
- 26 *employers in order to provide health care coverage to their*
- 27 *agricultural employees.*

1     (2) *The study required by paragraph (1) shall include, but not*  
2 *be limited to, the magnitude of the challenges facing California*  
3 *agricultural employees and employers with respect to access to*  
4 *health care coverage, the scope of the challenges facing other*  
5 *industries relative to these issues, how other states have addressed*  
6 *these challenging issues, and an assessment of existing health care*  
7 *coverage products available to agricultural employers who seek*  
8 *to offer health care coverage to their agricultural employees.*

9     (b) *The Senate Office of Research shall convene a working*  
10 *group of affected California stakeholders, including, but not limited*  
11 *to, agricultural employers, agricultural employer organizations,*  
12 *agricultural employees, agricultural employee organizations,*  
13 *community clinics, hospitals, health insurers, hospital*  
14 *organizations, physician organizations, physician representatives,*  
15 *and state agencies as appropriate.*

16     (c) *The Senate Office of Research shall report to the Legislature*  
17 *by January 1, 2009. The report shall include recommendations to*  
18 *ensure that agricultural employees in California are provided*  
19 *health care coverage and that agricultural employers who provide*  
20 *health care coverage to their employees are allowed to lower their*  
21 *health care costs.*