

Summary of DR 15-186, An act relating to a public health care coverage option
Sponsored by Representative Paul Poirier

Vermont Care

This bill proposes to create a public health care option, called Vermont Care, to be offered on the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange beginning in 2017. It would provide coverage for primary care, preventive care, chronic care, acute episodic care, and hospital services and include at least the same covered services and cost-sharing amounts as in the State employees' health plan, as well as a basic dental benefit. Vermont Care would provide coverage for all public employees in Vermont and be offered to all other Vermont residents who are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. State subsidies for plans in the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange would be available only for individuals enrolled in Vermont Care.

Individual mandate

The bill would enact an individual responsibility requirement to mandate that Vermont residents maintain health care coverage with an actuarial value at least equivalent to Vermont Care and would impose financial penalties on those who do not.

Public employees

The bill would remove health care from the matters that may be the subject of collective bargaining for active State employees, teachers, and municipal employees, and would instead make them eligible for coverage through Vermont Care.

Taxes on candy and sugar-sweetened beverages

The bill proposes to establish \$0.02 per ounce excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages sold in this State. It would also impose the State sales tax on candy.

Payroll tax

The bill proposes to establish an 8 percent payroll tax on all employers in Vermont with five or more employees and a 4 percent payroll tax on all employees.

Employer assessment

The bill would repeal the employers' Health Care Fund contribution requirement.

Loan repayment

The bill would appropriate \$500,000 for the Vermont Health Care Educational Loan Repayment Fund in fiscal year 2017.