

RCW 74.09.719 Compact of free association islander dental care program. (1) The COFA islander dental care program is established to provide dental services to COFA citizens who meet the requirements in subsection (2) of this section. The authority shall begin administering this program by January 1, 2020.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the program shall provide dental services as covered under RCW 74.09.520 to an individual who is eligible for the COFA premium assistance program under RCW 43.71A.020, or:

- (a) Is a resident;
- (b) Is a COFA citizen;

(c) Has income that is less than one hundred thirty-three percent of the federal poverty level; and

(d) Is enrolled in medicare coverage under Title XVIII of the social security act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1395 et seq., as amended).

(3) The authority may disqualify a participant from the program if the participant:

(a) No longer meets the eligibility criteria in subsection (2) of this section;

(b) Fails, without good cause, to comply with procedural or documentation requirements established by the authority in accordance with subsection (4) of this section;

(c) Fails, without good cause, to notify the authority of a change of address in a timely manner; or

(d) Withdraws the participant's application or requests termination of coverage.

(4) The authority shall establish:

(a) Application, enrollment, and renewal processes for the COFA islander dental care program; and

(b) Procedural requirements for continued participation in the program, including participant documentation requirements that are necessary for the authority to administer the program.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "COFA citizen" has the same meaning as in RCW 43.71A.010. [2019 c 311 s 4.]

Findings—Intent—2019 c 311: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The legislature recognized the important relationship between the citizens of the compact of free association (COFA) nations and the United States by enacting the COFA premium assistance program in 2018 to pay for premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for COFA citizens who purchase qualifying health coverage;

(b) While other Washingtonians who are income-eligible for medicaid receive dental coverage through apple health, individuals enrolled in the COFA premium assistance program do not currently have affordable access to dental coverage;

(c) Affordable access to dental care, including preventative care, is critical to treating the whole body health of an individual and preventing systemic health problems such as stroke, heart attack, and diabetes. Poor oral health is also associated with a wide range of hardships including difficulty obtaining employment, work absences due to pain, and decreased productivity; and

(d) Research shows that people living in households in which the primary language spoken at home is not English, seniors, people with disabilities, and people who identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders are disproportionately impacted by oral health inequities.

(2) The legislature therefore intends to increase access to dental services for COFA islanders residing in Washington by establishing a dental services program that provides dental coverage to income-eligible members of this population." [2019 c 311 s 1.]