

**Legislative Reference Bureau Note (excerpt)****HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES****MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

Under current law, DHS administers the Medical Assistance (MA) program, which is a joint federal and state program that provides health services to individuals who have limited resources. Some services are provided through programs that operate under a waiver of federal laws related to medical assistance (MA waiver programs). This bill requires DHS to study potential changes to the MA state plan and to waivers of federal law relating to medical assistance for certain purposes, including increasing the cost effectiveness and efficiency of care for the MA program and MA waiver programs and improving the health status of individuals who receive benefits under the MA program or an MA waiver program. If DHS determines, as a result of the study, that revision of existing statutes or rules would be necessary to advance any of the purposes for which the study was conducted, DHS may promulgate rules to implement certain changes, including making certain requirements, modifying benefits, revising provider reimbursement models, developing standards and methodologies for eligibility, and reducing income levels for purposes of determining eligibility. Before promulgating a rule, DHS must submit the proposed rule and any plan developed as a result of the study to JCF for review. DHS must submit an amendment to the state MA plan or request a waiver of federal laws related to medical assistance, if necessary, to the extent necessary to implement any proposal. If the federal Department of Health and Human Services does not allow the amendment or does not grant the waiver, DHS may not put the rule into effect or implement the proposal. To reduce the eligibility income levels to a certain amount, DHS must request a waiver from the secretary of the federal Department of Health and Human Services to permit DHS to have in effect eligibility standards, methodologies, and procedures that are more restrictive than those in place on March 23, 2010. If DHS does not receive approval for the waiver, DHS must reduce the eligibility income levels for MA programs and MA waiver programs to 133 percent of the federal poverty line for adults who are not pregnant and not disabled, as allowed under federal law. DHS may promulgate the rules as emergency rules.