

# California health insurance mandate will push other states

Expect lawmakers in other states to be encouraged by California's landmark passage last month of a bill requiring all but the smallest companies to provide health coverage for their employees. Gov. Gray Davis is expected to sign the bill.

**The details:** California employers with 200 or more workers would have to provide coverage by 2006 or pay into a state fund to cover the uninsured.

Businesses with 50 to 200 workers must comply by 2007. The mandate would apply later to those with 20 to 50 workers, but only if the state arranged tax credits to help them. Employers with fewer than 20 workers would be exempt.

Hawaii is the only other state that requires businesses to provide coverage. Maine approved a law last spring aimed at providing health insurance to residents by 2009.

Look for California's action to spark mandate momentum in other states where such legislation has been considered, including Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico and Wisconsin.