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**Health Care & Wellness Committee**

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**HB 1703**

**Brief Description:** Concerning child immunization exemptions.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Cody, Pedersen, Green, White, Wood, Bailey, Moeller, Morrell, Walsh, Nelson and Kenney.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires a parent or guardian to present specified notarized documents to exempt a child from school immunization requirements when the exemption is based on a philosophical or personal objection to immunization.

**Hearing Date:** 2/3/09

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103)

**Background:**

Before or on the first day of attendance, children at Washington's public or private schools (preschool through the 12th grade) or licensed day care centers must provide proof of immunization against certain vaccine-preventable diseases as determined by the Washington State Board of Health (BOH). However, a parent or guardian may exempt a child for one of several reasons:

- a physician certifies that a particular vaccine is not advisable;
- the parent or guardian certifies that his or her religious beliefs are contrary to the required immunization measures; or
- the parent or guardian certifies that he or she has a philosophical or personal objection to the child's immunization.

Under the BOH rules, the required immunization schedule includes immunization against 10 diseases, with an additional disease, pneumococcal, added beginning July 1, 2009.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Nearly all states allow medical and religious exemptions from their school immunization requirements. According to a 2005 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, 20 states allow exemptions based on philosophical or personal objections.

**Summary of Bill:**

Modifications are made to the documentation that a parent or guardian must present to exempt a child from school immunization requirements when the exemption is based on a philosophical or personal objection to immunization. In this case, the parent or guardian must present the following notarized documents:

- a statement requesting the exemption and recognizing that the child may be prohibited from attending school during an outbreak of a disease for which the child has not been immunized; and
- a note from a physician, physician assistant, or nurse stating that the parent or guardian has received information about the benefits and risks of immunization.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.