

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6270

As of January 21, 2010

Title: An act relating to emergency health care services.

Brief Description: Concerning emergency health care services.

Sponsors: Senator Keiser; by request of Insurance Commissioner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/21/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: Current insurance law defines emergency services as those covered health care services medically necessary to evaluate and treat an emergency provided in a hospital emergency department. The definition has lead to confusion about services necessary to stabilize someone that may be provided outside the emergency department, such as emergency surgery.

Summary of Bill: The insurance definition of emergency services is modified to include covered health care services medically necessary to evaluate and treat an emergency provided in a hospital.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Consumers are getting surprised with bills for their emergency services. We need to broaden the definition of where services are provided to evaluate and treat an emergency medical condition. An emergency that results in surgery to treat and stabilize a patient falls outside the current definition and may not be covered by the insurance under the emergency benefit.

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.

CON: This change in the emergency services that are covered in the hospital would create a problem because the current statutes on emergency services are not enforced.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor; Andrea Philhower, Beth Berendt, Office of Insurance Commissioner.

CON: Deborah Senn, Washington State Medical Association.