
Business & Financial Services Committee

HB 2188

Brief Description: Regulating air rescue or evacuation services.

Sponsors: Representatives Ryu and Parker.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts certain air rescue services providers from the Insurance Code.

Hearing Date: 1/12/12

Staff: Jon Hedegard (786-7127).

Background:

The Insurance Code (Code) governs all insurance transactions that occur in this state or affect subjects located within this state. "Insurance" is defined as "a contract whereby one undertakes to indemnify another or pay a specified amount upon determinable contingencies."

Among other duties for insurers, the Code requires:

- minimum reserves to ensure solvency;
- licensing of producers;
- registration with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC); and
- the filing of forms and rates with the OIC.

There are a number of services, products, persons, and entities that are regulated under the Code in a less stringent manner than a traditional insurance product, agent or broker, or insurer. There are also several exemptions from the Code. One exemption is related to private air ambulance services.

Private air ambulance services that solicit and accept membership subscriptions, charge fees, and provide services are not insurers or health carriers and are exempt from the provisions of the Code if the service:

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- meets licensure requirements;
- attains and maintains accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Services or another accreditation organization approved by the Department of Health;
- has operated in Washington for a minimum of two years; and
- submits evidence of compliance with these provisions to the OIC.

Summary of Bill:

Rescue, evacuation, emergency transport, and crisis management and consulting services related to an emergency (rescue services), include:

- rescue, evacuation, and emergency transport and crisis management services related to the emergency;
- locator services for medical and legal professionals;
- visa and passport services;
- emergency message services;
- emergency-related travel and emergency-related services and information; and
- other services established by rule of the Insurance Commissioner.

A subscription service that solicits membership subscriptions, charges membership fees, and provides rescue services to its members or designated members of a member's household is not an insurer or a health carrier.

A subscription service that provides rescue services must satisfy any licensing requirements of the jurisdiction in which the services are provided.

It is not required that a subscription service own the means of transportation that will be used to provide the contracted services.

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.