HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1008

As Reported By House Committee on:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to label information for over-the-counter medications.

Brief Description: Establishing requirements for labels for over-the-counter medications.

Sponsor(s): Representatives O'Brien, Dellwo, Wineberry and Winsley.

Brief History:
Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 20, 1991, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1008 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Casada, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cantwell; Edmondson; Franklin; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The Board of Pharmacy regulates the practice of pharmacy and the distribution of drugs in this state, including controlled substances, legend or prescription drugs, and over-the-counter or nonprescription drugs.

Currently, the board has no authority to establish requirements for label information for over-the-counter drugs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: There is a legislative finding that labels on packaged nonprescription drugs may be difficult to read and could pose a potential danger to the health and safety of customers.

Manufacturers of nonprescription drugs should evaluate and modify the labeling of nonprescription drugs for readability and clarity in both the cognitive and visual sense. The nonprescription drug manufactures association is invited to

consult with, and seek advice from, the Board of Pharmacy on a quarterly basis. The board is authorized to appoint an advisory committee to provide assistance. The board is required to report to the Legislature by December 1, 1993 regarding the progress being made toward improving the readability and clarity of labels.

This law expires on March 31, 1994.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement of the board to adopt by rule labeling requirements of over-the-counter drugs for readability and clarity is deleted. The prohibition against the manufacture and distribution of drugs which do not meet the labeling requirements adopted by the board is also deleted.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The manufacture of pharmaceuticals is a nation-wide business, and standards for labeling should apply nationally. Differing standards established by the several states could interfere with the interstate commerce of drugs and may, as a consequence, adversely affect access by consumers to necessary medications. The private sector should first try to solve any problems with labeling, and in fact, manufactures are addressing this problem now. The substitute bill will permit the board to assist the industry toward this end.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative O'Brien, prime sponsor (pro); Don Williams, Pharmacy Board (pro on substitute bill); Lars Hennum (pro on substitute bill); Doug Beeman (pro on substitute bill); Dr. Bill Robinson, Washington State Medical Association (pro on substitute bill); and John Weidenbrook, Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers' Association (con).