

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2571

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*As Passed House  
February 13, 1992*

**Title:** An act relating to infant mortality reviews by local health departments.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing infant mortality reviews.

**Sponsor(s):** By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Prentice, Moyer, Sprenkle, Silver, Paris, Braddock, Miller, Leonard, Nealey, H. Myers, P. Johnson, Mitchell, McLean, Schmidt, Forner, Betrozoff, Brough, Tate, Brumsickle, May, Neher, Carlson, Bowman, Jones, Wineberry, Franklin, Kremen, Roland, R. King, Jacobsen, Rust, Spanel, Chandler, J. Kohl, Winsley, Brekke and Anderson).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Health Care, February 3, 1992, DPS;  
Passed House, February 13, 1992, 96-0.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH CARE**

**Majority Report:** *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Casada, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cantwell; Edmondson; Franklin; Morris; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

**Staff:** Bill Hagens (786-7131).

**Background:** Occurrences of infant mortality in Seattle and King County are a major concern of the public health and medical community of that area. To address this problem, the local health department has instituted an infant mortality review process to: understand the circumstances surrounding the infant deaths; identify factors contributing to the deaths; and identify effective interventions.

A major concern in the conduct of infant mortality reviews is the potentiality of inappropriate release of private medical records obtained through the review process. Such a

pull could compromise researcher's ability to acquire complete and candid interview information.

**Summary of Bill:** "Infant mortality review" is defined. All information and records obtained for an infant mortality review is deemed confidential and is protected from discovery and subpoena. Examination of any person involved in a review in any legal proceeding as to the existence or content of information relating to an infant mortality review is proscribed. Requiring a local health department to release review data is prohibited.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** The bill is needed to study the cause of infant mortality.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Dr. Jim Kriger, Seattle/King County Department of Public Health (pro); Elizabeth Ward, Department of Health (pro); Robb Menaul, Washington State Hospital Association (pro); and Michelle Radosevich, Washington State Trial Lawyers (pro).