

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1008

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,
MARCH 28, 1991**

Brief Description: Evaluating labels for over-the-counter medications.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives O'Brien, Dellwo, Wineberry and Winsley).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Suzanne Brown (786-7483)

Hearing Dates: March 27, 1991; March 28, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Pharmacy regulates the practice of pharmacy and the distribution of drugs in Washington, 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:

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 must evaluate and modify the labeling of nonprescription drugs for readability and clarity in both the cognitive and visual sense. The nonprescription drug manufacturers association is requested to report to, 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 made toward improving the readability and clarity of labels.

This law expires on March 31, 1994.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

The bill addresses an urgent problem in drug labeling. The bill allows private sector manufacturers to proceed with current efforts to improve drug labeling with assistance of the Board of Pharmacy.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative O'Brien, original sponsor; Lars Hennum, Pharmacists of Washington (pro); John Weidenbruch, Non-Drug Manufacturers Association (pro); Don Williams, Board of Pharmacy (pro)