

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5634

AS PASSED SENATE, JANUARY 27, 1992

Brief Description: Requiring that dentists' offices comply with requirements for sterilization of equipment and infection control.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Cantu, Bailey and A. Smith).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5634 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Scott Plack (786-7409)

Hearing Dates: March 6, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Current law states that it is a dentist's "duty" to keep his or her office and dental equipment in a "... thoroughly clean and sanitary condition..." (18.32.725 RCW). However, there are no specific standards or definitions regarding this requirement. In addition, it is unclear which sanctions may be imposed if "duties" are not performed.

Some have expressed concern about sanitary standards and enforcement in dentists' offices in the wake of reports of HIV infection transmitted by a dentist to several of his patients while performing dental work.

SUMMARY:

The Dental Disciplinary Board must adopt rules establishing minimum requirements for sterilization of equipment and infection control in dentists' offices. In adopting the rules, the board must consider national standards, including those adopted for surgical procedures.

Dentists must comply with these standards. Failure to comply is defined as unprofessional conduct.

An appropriation from the health professions account is made to the Department of Health in the amount of \$49,000.

Appropriation: \$49,000

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Public concern regarding HIV infection and other infectious diseases makes it necessary to establish specific standards for sterilization in dental offices and clear guidance to regulatory authorities regarding penalties.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Senator Cantu (pro)