

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6296**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 12, 1992**

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

**SPONSORS:** Senators West, Niemi, Amondson, Stratton, Newhouse, M. Kreidler, Wojahn, Gaspard and Pelz

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

**Hearing Dates:** February 5, 1992; February 6, 1992

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**

**BACKGROUND:**

It is felt that the rate of infant mortality is unacceptably high in Washington. Infant mortality reviews may help identify preventable causes of infant mortality so that the causes may be addressed. Legal protections for the family of the infant, local health department officials and employees, and health care professionals participating in the reviews are likely to encourage the performance of such reviews.

**SUMMARY:**

All medical records, reports, statements, documents or summaries or analyses of such information used for the purpose of infant mortality reviews are confidential as to the identity of the infant and the infant's parents. The information cannot be discovered or subpoenaed from the local health department in any administrative, civil or criminal proceeding related to the death of the infant, but it can be discovered or subpoenaed from a health care provider. No local health department official or employee may be examined as to the existence of the documents assembled for an infant mortality review. This information is also protected from statutory public disclosure requirements.

The local health department may publish statistical compilations and reports of infant mortality reviews if the reports do not identify the infants or parents. These compilations and reports are subject to the public disclosure requirements.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

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

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This procedure can help prevent infant mortality by helping to obtain infant mortality reviews, which will provide more information as to the causes of infant mortality. The protection this bill offers is necessary.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** E. Russell Alexander, M.D., Chief of Epidemiology, Seattle-King County Dept. of Public Health; Elizabeth Ward, Dept. of Health; Kathleen Eussen, Washington State Association of Local Public Health; Beverly Jacobson, Washington State Hospital Association

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

Language is added to clarify that the provisions apply to the reviews authorized by local health departments. It is clarified that the protection of confidentiality applies to both adoptive and natural parents. Language is added to clarify that nothing in this bill affects existing child abuse and neglect reporting requirements.