

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5201

AS OF FEBRUARY 25, 1993

Brief Description: Providing for a naturopathic pilot program for state employees and basic health plan enrollees.

SPONSORS: Senators Skratek, Roach, L. Smith, Loveland, Niemi, Prentice, Moore, von Reichbauer, Bluechel, Pelz and Erwin

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Staff: Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

Hearing Dates: March 3, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The existing system of health care insurance provided by state agencies strongly favors allopathic medical care. Neither the Basic Health Plan nor the Health Care Authority covers services of naturopathic physicians for those persons enrolled in any health insurance programs offered by either agency.

At this time there is insufficient information to determine whether naturopathic physicians providing primary care within a managed care system could provide a cost-effective alternative to the existing managed care delivery systems under the Health Care Authority or the Basic Health Plan.

Also unavailable is information regarding the number of consumers who would choose to have primary care provided by a naturopathic physician, whether the outcomes for naturopathic care patients would be better or worse than similarly situated allopathic physicians, and if the availability of naturopathic care would help contain health care costs.

SUMMARY:

The Health Care Authority must establish a pilot project to determine if the availability of naturopathic care would result in improved health and cost savings.

The pilot program is open to state employees covered by the Health Care Authority and those persons enrolled in the Basic Health Plan.

The capitated rate for this pilot project must be no greater than the average cost for managed health care systems under the Health Care Authority or the Basic Health Plan.

Participants in the pilot program must as a condition of participation waive the right to legal action against the

state for care received from naturopathic physicians under this program.

The Health Care Authority must report the results of this project to the Legislature by December 1, 1995.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available