

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5429

AS OF FEBRUARY 22, 1993

Brief Description: Creating programs for fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect.

SPONSORS: Senators Erwin, Deccio, L. Smith, Winsley, Moyer, Prentice and Roach

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Hearing Dates:

BACKGROUND:

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a medically diagnosed birth defect caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. FAS is characterized by a cluster of congenital defects that include prenatal and postnatal growth deficiency, facial malformations, central nervous system dysfunction, and varying degrees of major organ system malformations. Children with the syndrome often have low IQ scores, learning disorders, poor judgment abilities, are easily distracted, and have numerous behavioral problems. Children with fetal alcohol effects (FAE) exhibit fewer of these defects and disorders.

Children with disabilities related to FAS or FAE are currently classified as developmentally disabled only if they meet the functional definition of mental retardation.

Advocates for children with FAS or FAE believe that the state should make greater efforts in providing FAS or FAE assessments and screening services, educational programs and materials, and services to children by including them in the definition of "developmental disability."

SUMMARY:

The Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) shall execute an interagency agreement to coordinate FAS and FAE services and programs. Each county shall create a FAS and FAE task force to assist state and local agencies in coordinating services and programs.

DOH shall create a FAS and FAE screening and assessment program for children. FAS and FAE identification training for physicians and practitioners shall be through the University of Washington and paid for by DOH. The department shall contract with local public health personnel to provide

educational materials and identification and screening services throughout the state.

OSPI shall collect and disseminate information about alcohol consumption risks for pregnant women and the penalties for alcohol-related driving offenses. OSPI, educational service districts, and local school districts are encouraged to offer in-services FAS and FAE training programs for school employees.

Women who have given birth to a child with FAS or FAE are given priority status for state-funded alcohol treatment services and programs. The definition of "developmental disability" is expanded to include those persons with FAS and FAE.

The Liquor Control Board shall provide educational information on the hazards and possible adverse effects of alcohol consumption, specifically including information on FAS and FAE.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: January 1, 1994