

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## HB 2990

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating a pilot project for third-party accreditation of boarding homes.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dyer, Backlund and Anderson.

**House Committee on Health Care**  
**Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care**

**Background:** Boarding homes are care facilities usually ranging in size from 10 to 60 residents. Smaller boarding homes are often called group homes and larger ones might be marketed to the public as assisted living facilities. Boarding homes are not just rooming houses. They offer room, board, and personal care or nursing services. Boarding homes are licensed, regulated and inspected by the Department of Health (DOH). There are over 400 boarding homes in the state with approximately 16,000 residents. Of this total, only 13 percent of the residents have their care paid by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The remainder of boarding home residents pay for their care from their own resources.

The DOH conducts its comprehensive licensing inspection approximately every 12 months and also responds to individual complaints concerning residents' care or the facility. If a violation is found to have occurred, the DOH has the authority to take actions such as consultations, placing conditions on a license, more staff training, stopping admissions, fines, and closing a facility.

Both 1995 and 1996 legislative reports on residents' rights, quality of care, and regulatory enforcement conducted by the Washington State Long-term Care Ombudsman Program found serious concerns with the way in which the DOH conducted investigations under its regulatory oversight. Further concerns have been raised in the ombudsman's 1998 follow-up investigation of the enforcement of safety and care standards in boarding homes. In that follow-up study, the ombudsman again found "widespread problems in the regulatory oversight provided by the state's Department of Health." This 1998 ombudsman report recommended that the Legislature eliminate the dual regulation of boarding homes and transfer jurisdiction of boarding homes to the DSHS.

The DOH is responsible for the development of quality of care standards in boarding homes and the regulatory enforcement of these standards.

Private third party accreditation refers to the quality of care reviews conducted by a private accreditation organization outside of government. Private third party accreditation is conducted for hospitals and in some other health care settings such as home care organizations, ambulatory care providers, and clinical laboratories. Third party accreditation of boarding homes is not conducted in Washington or in any other state.

**Summary:** A coalition of assisted living providers, long-term care consumer groups, and state regulatory agencies are required to develop a plan for implementing a pilot program for the third party accreditation of boarding homes. The plan is required to review the overall feasibility of implementing a pilot program, and to indicate the cost savings to the state, the impact on quality of care and quality of life, and the impact on the boarding home industry. The plan must be submitted to the Legislature by January 4, 1999. The Assisted Living Federation of America is required to provide funding for the pilot plan.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 96 0

Senate 46 0

**Effective:** June 11, 1998