

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5357

As of February 19, 1997

Title: An act relating to trauma care services for individuals who are unable to pay.

Brief Description: Requiring a study on the costs of trauma care services for individuals who are unable to pay.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Schow, Goings, Long, Prentice, Fraser, Winsley, Loveland, McAuliffe, Spanel, Strannigan, Sheldon, Wood, Kohl, Patterson, Brown, Snyder, Bauer, Kline and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/20/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: The state's Trauma Care Act, which passed the Legislature in 1990, set up an extensive system for referral and treatment of patients who suffer from traumatic injuries. The system includes 77 trauma centers around the state specifically designated to provide care for the traumatically injured. The original legislation included funds for planning and education, as well as a study of the costs of uncompensated trauma care.

As a result of the legislation, an independent study was done analyzing the costs of caring for patients who suffer traumatic injuries and have no means to pay for it. The report was completed in 1991 and estimated that the overall losses for participants in the trauma care system for the 1993-95 biennium would be \$38 million.

There has been concern since the trauma care system went into effect that hospitals and other providers who participate voluntarily will not be able to continue to do so due to the burden of uncompensated care.

Since that time there have been no further studies on the cost of uncompensated trauma care.

Summary of Bill: The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee is directed to study the cost of uncompensated trauma care services in designated trauma care centers around the state. The study must include all costs, charges, expenses, and levels of reimbursement associated with these services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

