

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5634

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 25, 1997

Title: An act relating to osteoporosis prevention and treatment education.

Brief Description: Providing for osteoporosis prevention and treatment education.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Deccio, Winsley, Long, Horn and Kohl.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/11/97, 2/25/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5634 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin and Wojahn.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Osteoporosis is a devastating disease, which causes a thinning of the bones and often leads to severe fractures. These fractures cause pain, disability, immobility and threaten the independence of the 25 million Americans that suffer from the disease.

Osteoporosis affects approximately 50 percent of women and 20 percent of men. The direct and indirect costs of osteoporosis in the United States were \$18 billion in 1993, and are expected to rise to \$60 to 80 billion by 2020.

Osteoporosis commonly progresses without symptom and remains undiagnosed until it has advanced to the point that the patient suffers a fracture, typically of the hip, spine or wrist.

Since there is no cure for osteoporosis, prevention, treatment and early detection are critical for reducing prevalence.

Concern exists that although substantial information about osteoporosis is available, it is not adequately distributed or designed to meet the needs of the public. It is suggested that there is a lack of knowledge among consumers, health care providers and government agencies about the prevention, detection and treatment of osteoporosis.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Within available resources, the Department of Health may establish a statewide osteoporosis prevention and treatment education program. The program promotes public awareness and knowledge about osteoporosis, with an emphasis on educating consumers and health care professionals about the causes, risk factors, prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis.

To meet the purposes of the program, the department may, within available resources, use various strategies enumerated in the bill, including: information and referral, educational materials, training, media outreach, community forums, support groups and risk assessment at public events. Within available resources, it also may conduct a needs assessment and disseminate information regarding osteoporosis related services in the state.

The Governor is to assign an existing interagency health policy group to function in part as an interagency council on osteoporosis. The council is responsible for coordinating and developing programs, information sharing, and reporting and making recommendations to the Legislature on osteoporosis educational initiatives. The council must also establish an advisory panel to provide nongovernmental input on the osteoporosis prevention and treatment education program.

In implementing the act, the department is authorized to contract with other organizations with appropriate expertise.

The department is given the authority to accept grants, services and property and to seek federal waivers to maximize federal funds for the program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill allows the Department of Health to create the program at its discretion, within available resources. The appropriation is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Osteoporosis is a devastating disease. There is a need for increased education about the disease and how to prevent it. This bill will authorize the Department of Health to accept grants and others funds to implement such an education program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Wojahn, prime sponsor; Mimi Fields, Department of Health; Rick Wickman, Blue Cross.