

6621-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Wojahn, Wood, Prentice, Winsley, McAuliffe, Kline, Franklin, B. Sheldon, Thibaudeau, Snyder, Goings, Fraser, Fairley and Kohl)

Brief Title: Requiring physicians to report suspected cases of domestic violence.

SB 6621-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Requires physicians licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW, doctors of osteopathy licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW, and podiatric physicians and surgeons licensed under chapter 18.22 RCW who, in the course of their practice and as the result of a treating relationship, encounter a patient who is or may be on the basis of clinical evidence a victim of domestic violence shall have a duty to report the victimization, or cause a report to be made, to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Declares that any physician participating in good faith in the making of a report pursuant to this act, or testifying as to alleged domestic violence in a judicial proceeding shall be immune from any liability arising out of such reporting or testifying.

Provides that a failure to report as required by this act is a gross misdemeanor punishable in accordance with RCW 9A.20.021. However, it is an affirmative defense to the charge of failure to report that the person had at the time of the failure to report a reasonable belief that making such a report would place the patient or the patient's family or household member in danger of immediate physical harm.