

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5864

As Passed House - Amended:

April 13, 1999

Title: An act relating to allowing residents of long-term care facilities to return to their home.

Brief Description: Allowing a health maintenance organization to return an individual to his or her nursing care facility.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, Thibaudeau and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 4/1/99 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/13/99, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- A health carrier that provides coverage for a person at a long-term care facility following the person's hospitalization shall, upon request of the individual, provide such coverage at the facility in which the person resided prior to the hospitalization.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Boldt; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Mulliken and Ruderman.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

Upon discharge from a hospital, some people may require rehabilitation services in a long-term care facility. Health insurance plans typically provide coverage for such services. In some cases, a person may already be living in a long-term care facility prior to his or her hospitalization. In such cases, the health insurance plan is under no obligation to allow the person to return to that same facility to receive the rehabilitation services.

Summary of Bill:

A health carrier that provides coverage for a person at a long-term care facility following the person's hospitalization shall, upon request of the individual, provide such coverage at the facility in which the person resided prior to the hospitalization. The requested facility must be able to meet the person's medical needs, and must agree to provide the services at the same rate and under the same terms and conditions as similar facilities with which the carrier otherwise contracts. The act may be known and cited as the "Kitson Act."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: We have made many friends here in my nursing home. It is my home. If I cannot return to my home after being in a hospital, it will affect my ability to recover. The state Ombudsman Office has received a high number of complaints from residents about this issue.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (support) Karen Tynes, Washington Association of Housing Services for the Aging; Shirley Daniel; and Kary Hyre, Washington State Long-term Care Ombudsman Program.