

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1452

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to cancer screening for low-income women.

Brief Description: Making available cancer screening to low-income women.

Sponsors: Representatives Kastama, Huff, Stensen, Wood, Miloscia, Regala, Edmonds, McDonald, Rockefeller, Santos, Lantz, Ruderman, Kenney, Edwards, Gombosky, Cody, Lovick, Conway, Hatfield, Linville, Hurst, Murray, Poulsen, Kagi, Campbell, McIntire, Scott and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/16/99, 2/18/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health (DOH) to develop and administer a breast and cervical cancer screening program for low-income women between the ages of 40 and 49.
- An appropriation of \$2 million, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is requested.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Boldt; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken and Ruderman.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

Breast cancer is the leading cause of death, from all causes, of women between the ages of 35 and 54. In Washington state there were an estimated 3,800 breast cancer diagnoses last year, which resulted in 900 deaths. All women are at risk for breast cancer. The two most significant risk factors are being female and getting older. 18.4 percent of all breast cancers occur in women ages 40-49. Approximately 200 women will be diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer in 1999. Over 50 of this total are expected to die from the disease this year.

However, when detection is early there is a greater chance of cure and more treatment. There is no known cure for advanced breast or cervical cancer. Mortality rates for both cancers are falling, the drop is attributed to better and more frequent screening, as well as to more effective treatment. Women whose income is too high to make them eligible for Medicaid but too low to afford health care insurance, or women who have lost their health care insurance in a divorce or who work for companies that don't provide health care insurance, run the risk of not having access to preventive health care.

The American Cancer Society recommends mammogram screening every one to two years for women between the ages of 40 and 49, with annual screening after that. They also recommend that women 18 years and older should have a Pap test and pelvic exam every year. The average cost of screening is \$200 per patient.

Currently, the state does not have a non-Medicaid program for screening low income women between the ages of 40 and 49 for breast and cervical cancer.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Health is required to develop a program for making breast and cervical cancer screening available to low income women between the ages of 40 and 49. The department is required to define low income and administer the program with no more than ten percent of the total appropriation. The department is also required to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2000, and annually thereafter on the departmental administrative expenditures, county administrative expenses, expenses for direct services, and the number of women served by the program.

An appropriation of \$2 million, or as much as may be necessary is requested from the general fund.

Appropriation: The sum of \$2,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 1999.

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

Testimony For: This measure will provide very much needed cancer screening for a highly vulnerable group of low-income women between 40 and 49. It will save lives.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Kastama, prime sponsor; Mary Selecky, Department of Health; David Allen, American Cancer Society; Gie Hough, citizen; Julia Canas, Susan G. Komen Foundation; Julia Davidson, Women for Women's Health; and Ellen Phillips-Angeles, city of Seattle and King County.