

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2454

C 207 L 00

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing a program to support family and other unpaid long-term caregivers.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Edmonds, Parlette, Cody, Kenney, Radcliff, Kagi, Edwards, Lantz, Hatfield, Ogden, Conway, Veloria, Lovick, Kessler, O'Brien, Regala, McDonald, Carlson, Tokuda, Cooper, Van Luven, Ruderman, Murray, Schual-Berke, Scott, Stensen, Keiser, Santos, Pflug, Rockefeller, Wood and McIntire).

House Committee on Health Care

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

As the first wave of baby boomers enter their mid-50s, an increasing number of their parents are moving into the ranks of what is called the "old-old" where disability and the need for daily care become increasingly likely. Data indicate that one out of four persons over the age of 80 will require nursing home care. Before these seniors are admitted into a nursing home, however, family members usually have been providing daily care for some time. These unpaid family caregivers most often are females (72 percent).

Unpaid family caregivers are persons who provide unpaid help with personal needs or household chores to a relative or a friend. It has been estimated that approximately 80 percent of all long-term care in this state is provided by unpaid family caregivers. In Washington, this translates to an estimated 504,272 caregivers.

A recent study by the American Society on Aging indicates that caregiving exacts an enormous emotional and physical toll including immense stress, high rates of depression, and feelings of anger and anxiety.

The state Respite Care Program provides unpaid family caregivers a limited range of care options to assist them with their caregiving activities. Services provided under the Respite Care Program include: respite assessment and care plan; hourly and daily respite care; care during planned and emergency episodes; and in-home and out-of-home service options. Levels of care include: supervision, personal care and nursing

care; and services appropriate to persons with dementing illness; or a neurological disorder including traumatic brain injury.

The caregiver is the client in the Respite Care Program. The caregiver is a spouse, relative, or friend who provides care and/or supervision on a daily basis for an adult who is functionally disabled. The caregiver does not receive financial compensation for the care and must be assessed as being at risk of placing the person they are caring for in a long-term care facility if respite care and other support services are not available. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) receive funding from Aging and Adult Services to administer the Respite Care Program. Case managers from the AAA perform an assessment of both the caregiver and of the participant the adult who is functionally disabled. The Respite Care Program received general state funding beginning in 1989.

The department requires participants to pay part of the cost of the respite care services received. There is no charge to the participant if his or her income is at or below 40 percent of the state median income. If the participant's income is between 40 and 99 percent of the state median income, he or she is charged a percentage of the cost of respite care. This amount is calculated using a sliding fee schedule. If the participant's income is 100 percent or more of the state median income, he or she pays the full cost of the service. The cost of respite care is determined by the number of hours or days of respite care authorized and used. The caregiver is not means tested or required to pay for the care received.

Summary of Bill:

Functionally disabled adults at risk of being institutionalized in a long-term care institution, if not for the help of unpaid family members or friends, are eligible for information and support services provided to relieve or assist their unpaid caregiver. The services and information that are available to unpaid caregivers by local Area Agencies on Aging are outlined.

This act is called the Fred Mills Act.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 96 0
Senate 47 0 (Senate amended)
House 81 0 (House concurred)

Effective: June 8, 2000