

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2683

As Passed House:

February 9, 2000

Title: An act relating to the protection of patients in state hospitals.

Brief Description: Protecting patients in state hospitals.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Cody, Haigh and O'Brien; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/1/00, 2/2/00 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/00, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Revises statutes regarding abuse of patients in state hospitals so that the requirements and processes for dealing with abuse and neglect will be consistent between hospital patients and vulnerable adults.

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; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken; Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

In 1999, the Legislature revised, standardized, and streamlined statutes involving vulnerable adults (SHB 1620). In that legislation, references to nursing homes and adult family homes were deleted from RCW 70.124 and placed with other nursing home law. Once the nursing homes were removed from this chapter, the title of

RCW 70.124 (Abuse of Patients “ Nursing Homes, State Hospitals) was no longer accurate. Furthermore, the issue of abuse of patients in state hospitals was isolated and separate from all other law relating to state hospitals making the law regarding abuse of patients at state hospitals incongruent with that on vulnerable adults. For many in this setting, both laws would apply at the same time resulting in two different ways to collect and report abuse.

Summary of Bill:

All language relevant to abuse of patients in state hospitals currently in RCW 70.124 will be removed and relocated into its appropriate section (RCW 72.23). The content related to abuse of patients in nursing homes removed by the Legislature in 1999 (SHB 1620) and that related to state hospitals removed in this legislation “ will then be repealed and eliminated.

Language about abuse to vulnerable adults has been added to appropriate sections of the law so that the requirements will be consistent between hospital patients and vulnerable adults.

The definition of "licensed physician" has been modified to include only medical doctors and osteopathic physicians, making language congruent with state hospital hiring policy.

Other technical changes are made, including deletion of Northern State Hospital as it was closed years ago, and making language clearer in the section related to protection for employees who make reports.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This will make the process for addressing abuse and neglect consistent with the statute changes last session for all other care settings.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Pat Terry, Mental Health Division, Department of Social and Health Services; and Andrea Stephensen, The Empower Alliance.