

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5199

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 1, 1999

Title: An act relating to reporting, treatment, and payment for treatment of tuberculosis.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions that concern the control and prevention of tuberculosis.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Wojahn and Winsley; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/18/99, 2/1/99 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5199 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin, Johnson and Winsley.

Staff: Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

Background: The Department of Health and local health departments are responsible for controlling the spread of tuberculosis (TB), a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease. State law authorizes the department to investigate, report, and track suspected and identified cases of TB and to order measures for the control of its spread.

There is outdated language in these laws directing public health authorities on the management of TB. Treatment and prevention measures have changed significantly and some language in current law does not reflect new treatment, prevention, or reporting practices.

Adequate laws to control the spread of TB are crucial because the disease is not extinct. While the number of cases has dropped significantly with the advent of new medications, TB continues to pose a threat to people in our state. In 1997 there were 307 cases of TB.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Antiquated language regarding TB treatment and control is updated. Reporting requirements are revised to conform to current reporting practices for other diseases which must be reported to the department within one day of detection. The list of individuals who can diagnose TB is expanded from physicians only to advanced registered nurse practitioners or licensed physician assistants.

Language is added stating that no county is required to budget for TB patients who cannot pay for their care.

Eight RCW sections which are no longer applicable to current TB control and treatment practices are repealed and such references as "state administered tuberculosis hospital facilities" are eliminated because they no longer exist.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Reference to a hospital approved to treat TB-described in WAC is removed. Language is added to include laboratory services to the list of services that should be provided for treating TB.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The legislation is necessary to make statutory language coincide with current practice.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Elizabeth Ward, State Dept. of Health (pro).