

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5786

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 2000

Title: An act relating to acupuncture as a medical care service.

Brief Description: Including acupuncture as a service provided as medical assistance.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Jacobsen, Patterson, Thibaudeau, McAuliffe, Franklin, Eide, Kline and Bauer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/18/99; 2/2/00 [DPS(WM), DNPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5786 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Deccio and Johnson.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Acupuncture is a health care service based on an Oriental system of medical theory utilizing Oriental diagnosis and treatment to promote health and treat organic or functional disorders by treating specific acupuncture points or meridians. It includes the following techniques: use of acupuncture needles to stimulate acupuncture points and meridians; use of electrical, mechanical, or magnetic devices to stimulate acupuncture points and meridians; moxibustion; acupressure; cupping; dermal friction technique; infra-red; sonopuncture; laserpuncture; point injection therapy (aquapuncture); and dietary advice based on Oriental medical theory.

Acupuncture is generally excluded from the scope of covered services under the state Medicaid program.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Effective January 1, 2002, the Department of Social and Health Services must offer acupuncture services under the state Medicaid program through state licensed providers. The department is to limit the number of treatments provided to a maximum of eight per patient per year and may develop additional limitations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: In the substitute bill, the effective date is moved back one year, and the maximum number of treatments allowed is reduced from 12 per patient per year, to eight per patient per year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Acupuncture has been documented to be an effective treatment in a diverse range of conditions. Acupuncture is widely used and is increasingly included in health care plans. In addition, acupuncture has been demonstrated to be cost effective. The bill is an important step in the direction of integrating proven health care services into the mix of services available to Medicaid patients.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Paul Allen; Catherine Cadoo, Community Health Centers of King County; Jeff Larsen, WOMA, WAPA; Terry Courtney, Joe Pizzora, Bastyr University; Christopher Huson, Acupuncture Association of Washington.