

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6022

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As of March 2, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to the medicaid trial prescription program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the medicaid trial prescription program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau, Benton, Prentice, Eide, Sellar, Honeyford and Patterson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 3/2/99.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Staff:** Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

**Background:** In 1997, the Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) in the Department of Social and Health Services convened a working group with the direction to identify and implement cost saving mechanisms within the pharmacy benefits portion of the budget. One of the ideas studied was a trial prescription drug program based on an existing program in British Columbia.

The intent of the program is to reduce waste by issuing "trial prescriptions." An individual for whom a certain drug is prescribed is initially given a limited supply of the drug. When it is determined that the drug has no adverse affects, the individual is issued the remainder of the prescription.

However, concerns were expressed regarding MAA implementation of this idea and the intended breadth of the program, and it was never pursued.

The cost of prescription drugs is expected to be a significant component of the overall increase in health care costs in the coming years.

**Summary of Bill:** The Department of Social and Health Services must establish a trial prescription drug program to increase compliance and reduce costs. Under the program, the department is to direct pharmacists to dispense a limited number of doses of an initial prescription drug. The program is to include an exception provision in the event that returning for the balance of the prescription would impose an undue hardship on a patient. The department, in consultation with its drug utilization review committee, is to determine the drugs to be included in the program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 1, 1999.

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

