

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5835

As Passed Senate, March 10, 2001

Title: An act relating to the emergency administration of epinephrine.

Brief Description: Regarding administration of epinephrine.

Sponsors: Senators Finkbeiner, Thibaudeau, Winsley, McAuliffe, Costa, Honeyford, McCaslin, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Kline, Benton and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/15/01 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/10/01, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Fraser, Parlette and Winsley.

Staff: Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

Background: Anaphylaxis is an allergic hypersensitivity reaction of the body to a foreign protein or drug. In some cases it can result in convulsions, unconsciousness, and even death. Epinephrine is used to treat anaphylactic reactions.

In 1999, the Legislature passed HB 1992, which requires emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to carry epinephrine and authorizes them to administer it upon the request of the patient or to other authorized individuals under the age of 18, with specifications. These provisions expire on December 31, 2001.

The bill also required the Department of Health (DOH) in cooperation with the House of Representatives Health Care Committee and Senate Committee on Health and Long-Term Care, to review the use of epinephrine for anaphylaxis by EMTs. The DOH has recommended extending the legislation beyond December 2001.

In addition, under current law, public school employees other than registered nurses are not allowed to administer shots, including epinephrine. Public school districts may use a variety of employees to provide health care services, and are not required to have registered nurses on staff.

Summary of Bill: The expiration date of December 31, 2001 on the authorization of EMTs to carry and administer epinephrine specified in RCW 18.73.250 is cancelled.

The state Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission is directed to adopt rules and policies to allow public school districts to provide for the administration of epinephrine to students

by school employees under certain circumstances. Immunity is provided to employees who administer epinephrine to students in compliance with these rules, and employees are protected against employer reprisal when an employee refuses to agree to administer epinephrine.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 14, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The pilot program has shown that in 25 out of 26 cases when EMTs administered epinephrine it improved or reversed the conditions of anaphylaxis, and the one case where it did not, it appears it could not have helped. Without the bill that passed in 1999, EMTs would not be carrying and using epinephrine and lives would have been lost. Many people have life-threatening food allergies and live with the fear of anaphylaxis day in and day out. Two years ago a child having anaphylaxis died when three different sets of EMTs had no epinephrine and could not help her. The bill that passed in 1999 should not be temporary, it is life-saving. Parents need to know that if their child is away from their care and something happens, that 911 can help by administering epinephrine. The current law is the only reason some parents let their children out of their sight. Some parents have had difficulty administering epinephrine correctly and need EMTs as backups in emergencies.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Bill Finkbeiner, sponsor; Nancy Kastner, Susan Kenny, Teresa D'Alessio, Stacia Hollar, Tom Saelid, private citizen; Marlo Martinez-Lynch, Food Allergy Awareness Parent Support Group; Janet Griffith, Department of Health.