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SENATE BILL 6590

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State of Washington 57th Legislature

2002 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Rossi and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/22/2002. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving K-12 preparedness and performance  
2 through promoting better oral health; adding new sections to chapter  
3 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.20A RCW; and creating a  
4 new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that dental  
7 problems impede children's success in school and affect their overall  
8 health by undermining their nutrition, speech development,  
9 concentration, and school attendance. Lack of treatment for dental  
10 health issues is estimated to result nationally in a loss of one  
11 million six hundred thousand school days annually, according to the  
12 national center for health statistics.

13 (2) The legislature recognizes that, according to a *United States*  
14 *Surgeon General Report of 2000: Oral Health in America*, dental disease  
15 is the most common chronic infectious disease facing our children today  
16 and is five times more common than asthma in children ages five to  
17 seventeen.

18 (3) The legislature recognizes that dental disease begins early,  
19 with fourteen percent of one and two year olds studied by the state

1 department of health experiencing dental decay. Dental decay  
2 prevalence increases with age, affecting fifty-four percent of  
3 Washington second graders. Decay in this age group increased between  
4 the 1994 and 2000 surveys.

5 (4) The legislature declares that measures such as oral health  
6 screenings and access to oral health disease prevention methods should  
7 be readily available to children in a variety of health care settings,  
8 including dental, medical clinic, and family physician settings. If  
9 prevention methods are employed, there will be substantial savings to  
10 the state's overburdened health care system.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW  
12 to read as follows:

13 The superintendent of public instruction, the department of health,  
14 and the department of social and health services are encouraged to  
15 collectively and collaboratively develop a plan that promotes age  
16 appropriate oral health screenings and preventive services at age one  
17 and at age five, or before entering a public or private school setting.  
18 The departments may report to the legislature on their findings and  
19 recommendations.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW  
21 to read as follows:

22 (1) The secretary is encouraged to design and implement a program  
23 of oral health prevention training sessions for physicians in each  
24 county no less than once per year, or at appropriate intervals in  
25 counties with lower numbers of resident physicians. This training  
26 should be modeled to complement existing mandates for oral cavity exams  
27 and be consistent with existing reimbursement for fluoride varnish  
28 applications by primary care providers.

29 (2) Physicians participating in the department training program  
30 under subsection (1) of this section shall receive continuing medical  
31 education credits for their completion in the program. Credits shall  
32 be awarded on a continuing medical education level 1 basis.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW  
34 to read as follows:

1       The department is encouraged to develop methods for promoting the  
2 use of oral health coordinators in local health jurisdictions that  
3 currently function without these resources.

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