

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1849

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to creating a list of health care providers willing to serve as volunteer resources.

Brief Description: Creating a list of health care providers willing to serve as volunteer resources during an emergency or disaster.

Sponsors: Representatives Bailey, Cody, Pflug, Morris, Skinner, McDonald, Ruderman, Pearson, Ahern, Schindler, Kagi, Kristiansen, Morrell, Orcutt, Darneille, Benson, Wood, Pettigrew, Newhouse, Clements, O'Brien, Linville, Moeller, Chase, Tom, Alexander, Talcott, Rockefeller, Woods and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/27/03, 3/4/03 [DPS];

Appropriations: 3/8/03 [DPS(HC)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Health (DOH) to ask health care professionals if the DOH may add their names and contact information to a list of potential volunteers to serve in case of a bioterrorist event, emergency, or disaster. The DOH shall make the list of volunteers available upon request to certain public agencies.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (DOH) regulates 55 different types of health care professions. Currently, there are over 250,000 health care providers credentialed in these fields.

The Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department (Department) is responsible for matters related to preparing for and carrying out all non-military emergency functions to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters and to provide aid to victims of these events. The Director of the Department is responsible for developing a comprehensive emergency management plan which shall address all natural, technological, or human caused hazards that pose a risk to Washington State and for coordinating local resources. Political subdivisions may create local organizations to develop local emergency management plans that are consistent with the Department's comprehensive plan. Local organizations may also enter into mutual aid agreements with other local organizations to provide reciprocal assistance in the event of a disaster.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Health (DOH) may ask health care professionals whether or not they are interested in having their names, professions, and contact information included on a list of potential volunteers to serve in the event of a bioterrorist incident, natural disaster, or other emergency or disaster where health care providers are needed. The DOH is required to maintain the list and send it upon request to local health departments, emergency planning and response agencies of this state or others, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The DOH is not required to use the credential application process for creating the list of volunteers. The requirement that the DOH provide the list to the Military Department annually is removed. The DOH must provide the list upon the request of a local health department, an emergency planning and response agency of this state or others, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2003.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Creating a list of willing volunteers will help to coordinate the activities of the public health system and its partners in the event of a public health emergency.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Bailey, prime sponsor; John Erickson, Department of Health; and Frank Scoggins, Military Department.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Health Care be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, DeBolt, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Amy Skei (786-7140).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The purpose of this bill is to help us prepare for a bioterrorism event or other emergency or disaster. Of concern would be getting the health care work force needed to treat the injured. This would allow the agency to contact those licensed health care professionals who are not currently practicing. Participation would be purely voluntary.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Pflug, prime sponsor.