

2991

Sponsor(s): Representatives Carrell, McMahan and Newhouse

Brief Description: Revising medical liability provisions.

**HB 2991 - DIGEST**

Finds that it is in the best interest of the people of the state of Washington to contain the significantly increasing costs of malpractice insurance for licensed health care professionals and institutions and noninstitutional care providers in order to ensure the continued availability and affordability of health care services in this state by enacting further reforms to the health care tort liability system.

Finds that, notwithstanding the tort reform measures it has enacted in the past, the amounts being paid out in judgments and settlements have continued to increase inordinately, and that as a result there have been dramatic increases in the cost of health care professional liability insurance coverage.

Finds that the upward pressures on already high malpractice insurance premiums threaten the publics' health by discouraging physicians and other health care professionals from initiating or continuing their practice in this state.

Finds that the state of California, largely as a result of its enactment of the "medical injury compensation reform act" in 1975, has been able to successfully stabilize the health care professional liability insurance market, maintain access to affordable quality health care services, and avert the kind of crisis now facing the residents of Washington.

Finds that such reforms are rationally related to the legitimate goals of reducing the costs associated with the health care tort liability system while ensuring adequate and appropriate compensation for persons injured as a result of health care, ensuring the continued availability and affordability of health care services in this state, preventing the curtailment of health care services in this state, stabilizing insurance and health care costs, preventing stale health care liability claims, and protecting and preserving the public health, safety, and welfare as a whole.