
Health Care Committee

HB 2069

Brief Description: Expanding access to insurance coverage through the small business assist program.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Hankins, Cody, Sells, Green, Kenney, Moeller, Conway and Chase; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a small business coverage option through the Health Care Authority.

Hearing Date: 2/24/05

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Recent rapid increases in the cost of health care has been it difficult for small employers to afford to provide coverage for their employees health care coverage. The percentage of small employers providing health care coverage for their employees has declined for the past several years. The Health Care Authority provides subsidized health coverage for low-income individuals who meet income eligibility standards through the Basic Health Plan.

Summary of Bill:

A Small Business Assist Program (Program) is created in the Health Care Authority. The Program will be open to businesses employing between two and 50 employees, if the employer has not offered health coverage for at least six months at the time of application. The Program will begin accepting application for the program by January 1, 2007. The administrator of the Health Care Authority is authorized to design one or more schedules of covered benefits for small business assist enrollees. The Program will be exempt from the requirements of Title 48 RCW.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 17, 2005.

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