

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1486

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 28, 2005

Title: An act relating to health care services.

Brief Description: Concerning health care services.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Conway, Wood and Sells).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/05, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/21/05, 3/28/05 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: The Basic Health Plan (BHP) is a state sponsored program administered by the Health Care Authority (HCA) to provide subsidized health insurance coverage to low income Washington residents who are not eligible for Medicare or institutionalized at the time of enrollment. Medical assistance is also available to state residence, from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), primarily through the Medicaid program. Little information is currently available regarding the employment status and employers of BHP enrollees and medical assistance recipients.

Summary of Amended Bill: Both the HCA and DSHS, in coordination with the Employment Security Department, are to report annually to the Legislature on the employment status of BHP enrollees and medical assistance recipients. Each report is to include: (1) the number of employees by employer; (2) the employee size of the employer; (3) the number of employees by industry type; (4) the number of hours worked by employees; (5) the number of employees with multiple employers; (6) the number of employees who chose receipt of the public health insurance program instead of coverage offered by their employer, and why; and (7) the number of employees referred to the public program by their employer, and the number referred by others. The report is to be structured to identify seasonal variations that may impact the composite information in the report.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill adds the requirement that each report to also include information on the number of enrollees who chose public programs instead of available employer coverage, and on who referred the enrollees to the public programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill passed the House unanimously. It purposes to identify employers that have employees on public assistance so that policies can be developed to address the underlying causes of uninsurance. It will allow the legislature to work with employers to determine the reasons why the cost of health care is being shifted to the state, and to develop general strategies to address health care costs. It is important to understand why those who are enrolled in public assistance programs do not have options with their employer.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Conway, prime sponsor.