

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5494

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 21, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to identifying health care providers covered by the retired health care provider liability malpractice insurance program.

**Brief Description:** Identifying health care providers covered by the retired health care provider liability malpractice insurance program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Parlette, Benson, Pflug and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Health.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/7/05, 2/21/05 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

**Background:** The Department of Health administers a program to purchase malpractice insurance for certain retired primary health care providers who volunteer their services to serve low-income patients.

In order to qualify, the provider must be a physician, naturopath, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, dentist, or other health care provider whose profession is determined to be in short supply. The liability insurance is potentially available for providers who volunteer at any clinic serving low-income patients that is a public entity, private nonprofit corporation, or other established practice setting as defined by the Department of Health. If program funding does not cover all applicants, priority is given to providers practicing at public or nonprofit entities.

**Summary of Bill:** Specialists whose malpractice insurance premiums are comparable to those for primary care providers would also be eligible for the malpractice insurance. The prohibition on providers insured under this program from providing specialized care and treatment is removed, although allowable care continues to be limited to noninvasive procedures and must not include obstetrical care.

**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:** Many retired physicians would not be able to volunteer if their malpractice insurance premium was not covered. Expanding the program to allow for specialists to be covered provides better access for patients and would be especially valuable in rural areas.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Isaac Pope, Pope's Kids Place; Paul Bollinger, Free Clinic of Southwest Washington; Jane Jones, Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic; Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health.