
HOUSE BILL 1737

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Schual-Berke, Cody, Clibborn, Fromhold, Bailey, Woods, Moeller, Darneille and Haler

Read first time 02/03/2005. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to public health improvement; and creating new
2 sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) The public health system as defined in RCW 43.70.575 is
6 essential to fulfilling the state's constitutional responsibility to
7 protect the health and safety of its citizens.

8 (2) The population-based services provided by the public health
9 system are cost-effective and are critical in improving the value of
10 public investments in all types of health services and in controlling
11 health care costs.

12 (3) Our state public health system lacks the capacity to fulfill
13 its critical functions with respect to well understood health threats
14 such as impure air and water, unsanitary living conditions, unsafe
15 food, and inadequate rates of immunization.

16 (4) The public health system lacks the capacity to address the
17 emerging health threats of the 21st century including bioterrorism and
18 other emergencies, health disparities, the spread of drug-resistant
19 tuberculosis, HIV, SARS, West Nile virus, and other infectious

1 diseases, and the predictable increases of heart disease, cancer,
2 diabetes, and other diseases that will result from tobacco and other
3 drug addiction, poor diet, and inadequate exercise.

4 (5) According to the provisions of chapter 43.70 RCW the department
5 of health has developed a public health improvement plan, in
6 consultation with local health jurisdictions, the state board of
7 health, and other state agencies, health services providers, and
8 citizens concerned about public health.

9 (6) The public health improvement plan includes standards for all
10 elements of the public health system and provides a detailed accounting
11 of both performance and funding deficits in the current system,
12 suggesting ways in which additional funds could be used to improve that
13 system.

14 (7) The legislature's most urgent business is the review of this
15 plan and the determination of a legislative plan for public health
16 improvement.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) There is hereby established the joint
18 public health financing committee. Its members shall include the
19 chairs, vice-chairs, and ranking minority members of the house of
20 representatives and senate committees on health and of the principal
21 fiscal committee within each chamber. In addition, one representative
22 of the office of the governor and one representative of each member of
23 the public health improvement partnership shall also serve as nonvoting
24 members. The committee shall appoint an executive committee not to
25 exceed four members from among its voting members and may appoint such
26 subcommittees, advisory groups, or other bodies as it sees fit.
27 Staffing assistance shall be provided by the house of representatives
28 office of program research, senate committee services, and the joint
29 legislative audit and review committee. The legislative auditor shall
30 coordinate legislative staffing. The department of health and the
31 office of the governor shall provide such staffing assistance as may be
32 reasonably required within their existing resources.

33 (2) The committee shall:

34 (a) Analyze the costs and benefits to state government, to private
35 businesses, and to state residents from fully implementing the
36 standards for public health contained in the 2004 public health
37 improvement plan;

1 (b) Recommend strategies and a schedule for improving public health
2 programs throughout the state according to that plan, including the
3 timing of increased funding for public health services linked to not
4 more than a six-year schedule for full implementation of recommended
5 improvements;

6 (c) Recommend a source and level of dedicated funding the
7 legislature should provide for public health services. The
8 recommendation shall include methods to ensure that such funding does
9 not supplant existing federal, state, and local funds received by any
10 element of the public health system; and

11 (d) Conduct a review of the public health improvement plan as
12 presently authorized in state law and recommend how its needed
13 functions might most efficiently be integrated in the regular
14 functioning of the public health system, and make recommendations about
15 the need to continue requiring a public health improvement plan.

16 (3) The committee shall complete an interim report to the governor
17 and the legislature by December 1, 2005, and a final report by December
18 1, 2006.

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