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SENATE BILL 5839

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser and Deccio

Read first time 02/09/2005. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to regulation of free-standing health clinics;  
2 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that free-standing  
5 health clinics are an important component of the health care system in  
6 Washington state. Many services formerly performed only in hospitals  
7 are now performed in such clinics. This may provide Washington  
8 residents with increased access to affordable services, but could be  
9 detrimental to patient health and safety. Unlike many other states,  
10 Washington does not license or otherwise regulate these clinics. It is  
11 the intent of the legislature to determine whether licensure and  
12 regulation of free-standing health clinics in Washington is  
13 appropriate.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of health shall study and  
15 report on the need for the state to license and regulate free-standing  
16 health clinics. The study shall consider:

17 (a) Trends in the number and type of procedures performed in

1 free-standing health clinics that at one time were exclusively  
2 performed in hospitals;

3 (b) The extent to which the lack of state licensing and regulation  
4 of free-standing health clinics impacts the health, safety, or welfare  
5 of clinic patients;

6 (c) The potential statewide impact of licensing and regulation on  
7 patient access to affordable care;

8 (d) The extent to which free-standing health clinics are subject to  
9 licensure and regulation in other states, the nature of that  
10 regulation, and evidence of its effect on patient safety and access to  
11 affordable care; and

12 (e) Any other factors the department of health determines relevant  
13 to the question of whether the state should license and regulate  
14 free-standing health clinics.

15 (2) In conducting the study, the department of health shall consult  
16 with all relevant parties and report its findings and recommendations  
17 to the legislature by December 1, 2005.

18 (3) For purposes of this section, "free-standing health clinic"  
19 means any facility not otherwise part of a licensed hospital where  
20 advice, counseling, diagnosis, treatment, surgery, care, or services  
21 relating to the preservation or maintenance of health are provided on  
22 an outpatient basis for a period of less than twenty-four consecutive  
23 hours to persons not residing or confined at such facility.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act expires December 31, 2005.

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