
SENATE BILL 6183

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senator Kastama

Read first time 01/09/2006. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to hepatitis C; adding new sections to chapter
2 70.54 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

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

5 (1) Hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne infection in the
6 United States, infecting an estimated 3.9 million people. It is the
7 leading cause for liver transplantation, and accounts for ten to twelve
8 thousand deaths per year.

9 (2) National data suggests that as many as one hundred thousand
10 people in Washington may be infected with hepatitis C, though no true
11 count is available. Too little is known about the demographics of
12 those infected, their modes of exposure, access to treatment, and the
13 general impact of hepatitis C in this state.

14 (3) There is no vaccine for hepatitis C, and no known cure.
15 However, its transmission is avoidable, and those who carry the virus
16 can take steps to improve their well-being and reduce their risk of
17 liver and other associated chronic diseases. Education and outreach
18 are key to these prevention efforts.

1 (4) Among the objectives listed in the 2004 Washington state
2 hepatitis C strategic plan are: (a) Improving the state and local
3 health department surveillance system to increase and enhance knowledge
4 of hepatitis C incidence and prevalence in Washington; and (b)
5 providing a comprehensive hepatitis C public awareness and education
6 campaign.

7 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish a
8 system to accurately monitor the incidence of hepatitis C in the state
9 of Washington for the purposes of understanding, controlling, and
10 reducing its occurrence, and directing appropriate resources to its
11 treatment. To accomplish this, the legislature has determined that
12 hepatitis C cases shall be reported to the department of health, and
13 that a statewide population-based hepatitis C registry shall be
14 established. To encourage primary and secondary prevention activities,
15 a comprehensive hepatitis C awareness and education campaign shall also
16 be established.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.54 RCW
18 to read as follows:

19 (1) The department of health shall establish and maintain an up-to-
20 date registry which shall include a record of all reported cases of
21 hepatitis C in Washington and any other information relevant and
22 appropriate in conducting thorough and complete epidemiological surveys
23 of hepatitis C, to enable analysis of the problem and to plan for and
24 provide services to persons with hepatitis C and their families.

25 (2) Every health care facility and independent clinical laboratory,
26 and those physicians or others providing health care who diagnose or
27 treat any patient with the hepatitis C virus shall provide the
28 department of health with the information required under subsection (1)
29 of this section.

30 (3) Data obtained under this section shall be used for statistical,
31 scientific, medical research, and public health purposes only. The
32 department of health shall ensure that access to data contained in the
33 registry is consistent with federal law for the protection of human
34 subjects and consistent with chapter 42.48 RCW.

35 (4) Providing information under this section shall not create any
36 liability on the part of the provider, nor shall it constitute a breach
37 of confidentiality.

1 (5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section.

2 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 70.54 RCW
3 to read as follows:

4 A comprehensive hepatitis C public awareness and education campaign
5 shall be implemented by the department of health. The campaign shall
6 include at a minimum:

- 7 (1) Information on risk factors;
- 8 (2) Primary prevention activities;
- 9 (3) The value of early detection;
- 10 (4) Methods to prevent chronic liver disease;
- 11 (5) The avoidance of further transmission; and
- 12 (6) Available treatment options.

13 The campaign should place special emphasis on those groups at
14 greatest risk for hepatitis C, such as low-income groups, veterans,
15 injection drug users, prisoners, and racial and ethnic groups known to
16 have higher rates of infection.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of this
18 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by
19 June 30, 2006, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and
20 void.

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