
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6189

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senator Keiser)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/06.

1 AN ACT Relating to hospital billing information; adding a new
2 section to chapter 70.41 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the
5 implementation of health information technologies in hospitals,
6 including electronic medical records, has the potential to
7 significantly reduce cost, improve patient outcomes, and simplify the
8 administration of health care. Further, the legislature finds that the
9 number of and complexity of the bills that result from a hospital stay
10 can be confusing to patients. Therefore, it is the intent of the
11 legislature to encourage hospitals to design the implementation of
12 health information technologies so as to allow the hospital to provide
13 the patient, prior to or upon discharge, clearly understandable
14 information about the services provided during the hospital stay, and
15 the bills the patient is likely to receive related to each of those
16 services. Recognizing that complete implementation of the technologies
17 required to achieve this goal will take a number of years, the
18 legislature intends to require that hospitals immediately begin working

1 toward the goal by compiling and communicating information to assist
2 patients in understanding their bills.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.41 RCW
4 to read as follows:

5 (1) Prior to or upon discharge, a hospital must furnish each
6 patient receiving inpatient services a written statement providing a
7 list of physician groups and other professional partners that commonly
8 provide care for patients at the hospital and from whom the patient may
9 receive a bill, along with contact phone numbers for those groups. The
10 statement must prominently display a phone number that a patient can
11 call for assistance if the patient has any questions about any of the
12 bills they receive after discharge that relate to their hospital stay.

13 (2) This section does not apply to any hospital owned or operated
14 by a health maintenance organization under chapter 48.46 RCW when
15 providing prepaid health care services to enrollees of the health
16 maintenance organization or any of its wholly owned subsidiary
17 carriers.

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