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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6469**

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**State of Washington**

**59th Legislature**

**2006 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Keiser, Haugen, Franklin, Brown, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Spanel, Kline and Kohl-Welles)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/06.

1       AN ACT Relating to the creation of the blue ribbon commission on  
2 health care cost and access; 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) The availability and affordability of quality health care is of  
6 critical importance to the well-being of Washington residents, yet the  
7 cost of health care is increasing at a disproportionately high rate;

8       (2) These increasing costs are placing quality care beyond the  
9 reach of a growing number of Washington citizens and contributing to  
10 health care expenditures that strain the resources of individuals,  
11 businesses, and public programs;

12       (3) Efforts by public and private purchasers to control  
13 expenditures, and the stress these efforts place on the stability of  
14 the health care work force and viability of health care facilities,  
15 threaten to reduce access to quality care for all residents of the  
16 state; and

17       (4) Addressing this issue demands a reasoned and constructive  
18 discussion regarding the objectives of the state's health care system,

1 and a coordinated, coherent, and sustainable plan to achieve these  
2 objectives.

3 It is the intent of the legislature, in establishing the blue  
4 ribbon commission on health care cost and access, to provide a forum  
5 for the development and implementation of long-term strategies which  
6 assure access to secure, appropriate, and affordable care for all  
7 Washington residents.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The blue ribbon commission on health care  
9 cost and access is established, to include the following fourteen  
10 members:

11 (1) Two members from each caucus of the senate, appointed by the  
12 president of the senate, and two members from each caucus of the house  
13 of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of  
14 representatives;

15 (2) The governor, or her designee, who shall serve as chair of the  
16 commission;

17 (3) The insurance commissioner, or his designee;

18 (4) The assistant secretary for health and recovery services in the  
19 department of social and health services;

20 (5) The medical director of the worker's compensation program in  
21 the department of labor and industries;

22 (6) The secretary of the department of health; and

23 (7) The administrator of the health care authority.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Consistent with funds appropriated  
25 specifically for this purpose, the blue ribbon commission on health  
26 care cost and access may hire staff or contract for professional  
27 assistance. The office of financial management, other state agencies,  
28 the senate, and the house of representatives shall provide staff  
29 support upon request of the commission.

30 (2) The commission shall establish ad hoc technical advisory  
31 committees as appropriate, to include representatives of business,  
32 employee organizations, health care providers, pharmaceutical  
33 manufacturers, public health officials, health carriers, state  
34 agencies, health policy experts, consumer organizations, community-  
35 based regional health care organizations, the Washington health  
36 foundation, the Washington healthcare forum, the general public, and

1 any others with an interest in or expertise regarding the work of the  
2 commission. Committee members shall not be compensated or reimbursed  
3 for related travel expenses.

4 (3) In the conduct of its business, the commission shall have  
5 access to all health-related data available to state agencies by  
6 statute. The head of each agency shall provide the commission with all  
7 requested data or other relevant information maintained by the agency  
8 in a timely and easy-to-comprehend manner.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** By December 1, 2006, the blue ribbon  
10 commission on health care cost and access shall develop a sustainable  
11 five-year plan to substantially improve access to affordable health  
12 care for all Washington residents. The plan shall:

13 (1) Be based on explicit, measurable goals reflecting a realistic  
14 assessment of the current status of Washington's health care system,  
15 the medical treatment and services to which all Washington residents  
16 should have access, and the financial and other resources available to  
17 provide them;

18 (2) Identify the most significant factors contributing to  
19 increasingly inaccessible and unaffordable health care and health care  
20 insurance in Washington state;

21 (3) Include a list of strategies prioritized by their likelihood to  
22 cost-effectively address these factors and achieve the identified  
23 goals;

24 (4) Identify what must be done, by whom, and by when to assure  
25 implementation of each of the listed strategies, including any  
26 necessary changes in statute or administrative rule;

27 (5) Estimate the cost to the responsible party of implementing the  
28 listed strategies;

29 (6) Build a foundation for subsequent long-term plans to assure on-  
30 going access for all Washington residents to affordable health care.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If specific funding for the purposes of this  
32 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by  
33 June 30, 2006, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and  
34 void.

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