

**HB 2464 - DIGEST**

Finds that, in recognition of the complex issues that are raised by the addition of specialty hospitals in communities throughout the nation, the federal government established an eighteen-month moratorium that effectively prevented the establishment of any new physician-owned specialty hospitals reimbursed under medicare and other federal health programs. During the moratorium several federal agencies and private research organizations reviewed the potential impacts of these types of hospitals on the health care system. Among the recommendations, the medicare payment advisory commission urged the continuation of the federal moratorium through January 1, 2007.

Finds that in Washington state a task force has been convened to review the certificate of need program and report to the legislature by November 2006. This task force will be providing recommendations on several topics specific to Washington state's certificate of need program including the appropriate coverage of specialty hospitals under the program. The legislature finds that it would be premature to take any action with respect to the regulation of specialty hospitals before the issuance of the task force report.