

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2668

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to long-term care.

Brief Description: Expanding programs for persons needing long-term care.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Green, Cody, Hunt, McCoy, Wallace, Pedersen, Campbell, McIntire, Conway, Simpson, Kenney and Darneille.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/23/08, 1/30/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands services to seniors needing assistance with long-term care.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Condotta.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

The Long-Term Care Task Force (Task Force) was created in 2005 in legislation at the request of Governor Gregoire. The Task Force met for two and a half years, and held its last meeting in July 2007. The Task Force received testimony related to the fact that most long-term care services are provided by family members and informal caregivers.

One of the themes that emerged in Task Force meetings was that informal caregivers – family, friends, and neighbors who make up the vast majority of care providers – need more

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access to information, community services, respite, equipment, counseling, training, and other forms of support to continue to care for loved ones in their homes and neighborhoods for as long as possible. Further, information was presented to the Task Force that better use of preventive health care strategies and improved management of chronic care would promote and sustain informal caregiving around the state.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Caregivers who provide critical health and safety support to long-term care recipients may receive a one-time voucher benefit which may be used for respite or other services. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will develop a caregiver assessment and referral tool to determine eligibility for this benefit and other services. Statewide services provided by DSHS and the area agencies on aging will include long-term care planning, counseling, crisis intervention, and streamlined access to community based services.

Adult family homes are not required to develop plans of care or discharge for respite care services. When providing respite care, boarding homes will obtain sufficient information to meet the individual's needs.

The Department of Health is directed to develop a statewide Senior Falls Prevention Program (Program). The Program will include affordable senior focused exercise programs, community education, and assessments on falls risk identification and reduction.

The DSHS is directed to provide additional support to residents in community settings who exhibit challenging behaviors that put them at risk for institutional placement.

A senior dental access project is proposed. The Program will provide enhanced reimbursement rates for certified dentists who provide specific procedures and for medical providers who provide preventive oral health services. Coordination with the University of Washington and outreach with the community is identified.

The bill contains a null and void clause unless funded in the budget.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Boarding homes are required to gather sufficient information to ensure they can meet an individual's needs when providing respite care.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This legislation will help vulnerable adults and their caregivers. The elderly and disabled will be able to continue living in their own homes with additional supportive services. Reducing injuries from falls and providing seniors with better access to dental care are important initiatives.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; Tara Lee, Washington Dental Service Foundation; Dennis Mahar, Elder Care Alliance and Washington Association of Area Aging Agencies; Elaine Armantrout, Physical Therapy Association of Washington; Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health; Carolyn Edmonds, Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Gary Weeks, Washington State Health Care Association; and Sally York, Pierce County Fall Prevention Coalition and Northwest Orthopedic Institute.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.