

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2ESSB 5100

As Passed House - Amended:

March 6, 2008

Title: An act relating to information for students regarding health insurance.

Brief Description: Regarding health insurance information for students.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, McAuliffe, Regala, Fairley, Shin, Weinstein, Murray, Keiser, Prentice, Kline, Spanel, Fraser, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/26/08, 2/28/08 [DPA];

Appropriations Subcommittee on Education: 2/29/08 [DPA(ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/6/08, 93-0.

Brief Summary of Second Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Creates a pilot project where up to six school districts annually inquire whether students have health insurance; seek parental authorization to share information; develop information-sharing agreements with a local health outreach organization; and authorize the outreach organization to contact families and assist them in enrolling students in a medical program.
- Requires data collection and a report on the number of students without insurance and the development of information-sharing agreements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Liias, Roach, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Education. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Haler, Herrera, Hunter, Jarrett, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Quall, Seaquist, Springer and Wallace.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Background:

As part of a children's health bill enacted in 2007, the Legislature directed the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to undertake an outreach and education effort to enroll children in health coverage, including the expanded coverage authorized by the bill. The DSHS must collaborate with other health agencies and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the outreach effort, as well as contract with community-based organizations and government entities such as local health departments to help families apply for and access health coverage.

In Whatcom County, the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (Alliance) is a community non-profit organization that has developed working partnerships with local school districts to share information about students' health coverage and provide information to families about health insurance eligibility, options, and costs. The Alliance also conducts outreach regarding health coverage through the schools using a variety of communication vehicles. The Alliance and the school districts have developed information-sharing agreements to ensure that state and federal laws protecting student and patient privacy are maintained.

Summary of Amended Bill:

By August 1, 2008, the OSPI must select up to six school districts from urban and rural areas and including Eastern and Western Washington, to implement the following pilot project:

- (1) Beginning in 2008-09, as part of its enrollment process, each participating school annually inquires whether a student has health insurance and includes a statement explaining that an outreach worker may contact families with uninsured students about options for health care coverage. Provisions must be made for the parent or guardian to authorize sharing of information for this purpose.
- (2) Each student's health insurance status is recorded in the district's student information system.
- (3) By December 1, 2008, the school develops a list of students without insurance for whom parent authorization to share this information has been granted. The list includes student identifying information and contact information for the parent or guardian.
- (4) By January 1, 2009, each participating school and a local outreach organization, where available, works to put in place an agreement to share student information in accordance

with confidentiality requirements. Once the agreement is in place, the school shares the list of students with the outreach organization. An outreach organization is a nonprofit organization or a local government entity either contracting with the DSHS to provide outreach regarding access to health coverage or otherwise qualified to provide education and enrollment services to uninsured children.

- (5) The outreach organization contacts families and assists them to enroll students on a medical program.

By September 1, 2008, the OSPI and the DSHS must develop and make available a model agreement to enable schools in the pilot project to share student information in compliance with state and federal confidentiality requirements.

By July 1, 2009, the participating schools must report to the OSPI on the number of students identified without health insurance and whether an agreement is in place with an outreach organization. By December 1, 2009, the DSHS and the OSPI must submit a joint report to the Legislature that provides summary information on the number of students identified without health insurance, the number of agreements with outreach organizations, the impact of outreach efforts, the cost of collecting and reporting the data, and any recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended 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: (Education)

(In support) When the Legislature created the "Cover All Kids" children's health program, there was much discussion about how to contact the children and their families. When you think about how to reach children, you have to ask the question: where are they? They're in school. To have community health organizations working with schools is not new, but the pilot project is needed to ensure there is minimal impact on the school and that outreach through the schools is sustainable over time. The Whatcom Alliance has developed multiple successful strategies to identify and get information to uninsured students and families. As long as the bill allows voluntary participation of schools, it can be supported. Schools can help play a part in getting parents the health information they need. The OSPI would like to work with the school administrators to identify volunteer schools.

(Neutral) This year, the bill is not an unfunded mandate as a pilot project.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education)

Communities Connect was organized in 2004 to promote community-based efficiency at the local level, and has already been involved with local school districts in attempting to collect information about children's health insurance. Prior experience indicates that the impacts on

local districts to participate in programs of this kind are relatively minimal. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) already contracts with local community-based organizations to do Medicaid outreach as part of the implementation of "Cover All Kids." Communities Connect supports the inclusion of funds to support the pilot, but a smaller amount of \$15,000 per pilot should be sufficient. There are already a number of districts that are willing to participate in this pilot. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been working with the DSHS to implement "Insure All Kids." This bill will be very helpful to understand the impacts at the local level of this type of data collection. The OSPI fiscal note assumed that districts would be starting from ground zero, but in fact many districts have already started developing processes for collecting this data. It will not require \$15,000 per district if this concept were implemented statewide, but these initial pilots will help figure out what that cost would be.

Persons Testifying: (Education) Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Holly Detzler, Communities Connect; Diane Beaman, Ferndale Schools; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

(Neutral) Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Association; and Isabel Munoz-Colon, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education) Holly Detzler, Communities Connect; and Isabel Munoz-Colon, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Education) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education) None.