

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1270

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 16, 2009

Title: An act relating to permitting electronic signatures on applications for public assistance and for benefits administered by the health care authority.

Brief Description: Permitting electronic signatures on applications for public assistance and for benefits administered by the health care authority.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Cody, Dickerson, Ericksen, Uptegrove, Springer, Roberts and Nelson; by request of Department of Social and Health Services and Health Care Authority.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/23/09, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/16/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: Legislation passed in 2007 directed the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to develop an online medical benefits application. The initial implementation of the online application is underway. While the initial application for health coverage can be completed electronically, full authentication and verification are completed with a hard copy written signature because the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requires specific state law to allow an electronic signature on medical assistance applications.

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers benefits for the Public Employees Benefits Board programs and the Basic Health program. Many forms documenting eligibility can now be submitted via electronic means, but the agency requires written signatures for authentication and verification on many forms.

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.

Summary of Bill: DSHS and HCA health coverage programs may accept electronic applications and electronic signatures for verification. All applications must have either a physical signature or an electronic signature. Electronic signature means a signature in electronic form attached to or logically associated with an electronic record to allow a paperless way of signing a document. This may include a sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with the record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill brings us into the twenty-first century and allows the departments to capture electronic signatures on health benefit applications. It is the same as the Senate Bill this committee passed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Dennis Martin, Health Care Authority; Manning Pellanda, DSHS.