

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6297

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to providing information regarding childhood immunizations to pregnant women.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of health to develop and make available resources for pregnant women regarding childhood immunizations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Senators Becker and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/19/14, 2/20/14, 2/26/14 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Directs the Department of Health to make resources available to expecting parents regarding recommended childhood immunizations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clibborn, Green, Jinkins, Manweller, Moeller, Morrell, Rodne, Ross, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; G. Hunt and Short.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention establishes a schedule for the vaccination of infants and children that are based on recommendations from the Advisory

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.

Committee for Immunization Practices. The Washington State Board of Health has adopted immunization requirements for schools and child care centers. The requirements address immunizations for 11 vaccine-preventable diseases based on national immunization guidelines.

The Department of Health (Department) provides information about immunizations to parents through several methods. The Department's Child Profile program routinely sends age-specific information to parents of children under age 6. The materials are timed to be sent 30 days prior to the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommended well-child check-ups. The Department also makes materials available to health care providers through the Health Education Resource Exchange which contains web-based materials for health promotion and health education that may be shared with patients.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department must develop resources regarding recommended childhood immunizations and make them available to expecting parents. The resources are intended to be provided to expecting parents by their health care providers to encourage discussions related to childhood immunizations and postnatal care.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The amended bill eliminates the requirement that the immunization information incorporate flexible approaches to vaccinations. References to "pregnant women" are changed to "expecting parents."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) People are afraid to have their children immunized because of scare tactics, but when women receive information during their pregnancy, they have time to review the information and see what works for their family. This gives people an opportunity to obtain knowledge before immunization and they will be better prepared to ask questions of their pediatrician. The original bill provides a foundation for support of the next generation.

(With concerns) The amendment raises concerns about vaccine alternatives. It is important to provide information that delaying or opting out of vaccinations increases the risk of getting preventable disease to the child, their family, and their community. Immunizations save lives

and prevent common, but serious, illnesses. Information about vaccine alternatives does not have a strong base of evidence. Information provided by the Department should be based on sound research and aligned with the recommendations of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A 2011 study shows that pediatricians are willing to discuss off-schedule immunizations with patients; however, putting such complex information in a brochure is not appropriate.

(Opposed) The earlier draft was better. The recommended immunization schedule offers the best protection for babies, is developed by medical and public health experts, and should be adhered to as the medical standard of practice. The best protection for children is to be fully vaccinated on time. Promoting flexible schedules for vaccinations could put the Department out of compliance with the federal Vaccines for Children Program and could result in the loss of funding. Health care providers already have the freedom to exercise their professional judgment in providing vaccines to children, and the decision should be between a parent and a provider. The state's vaccination rates have historically lagged, and flexible schedules could further reduce these rates and increase disease.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Becker, prime sponsor; and Sydney Smith Zvara, Association of Washington Healthcare Plans.

(With concerns) Alison Carl White, Within Reach; and Laurie Lippold, Washington Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics.

(Opposed) Michelle Roberts, Department Of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.