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SENATE BILL 5228

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State of Washington                      63rd Legislature                      2013 Regular Session

By Senators Shin, Chase, Keiser, Schlicher, and Conway

Read first time 01/23/13. Referred to Committee on Health Care .

1            AN ACT Relating to public notification of local health conditions;  
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; and adding a new section to  
3 chapter 70.05 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7            (1) By January 1, 2014, the department shall establish guidance for  
8 local health jurisdictions to consider while developing community  
9 health alert notification plans. The guidance must assist local health  
10 jurisdictions with the adoption of community health alert notification  
11 plans by addressing components of the plan including the:

12            (a) Methods for monitoring the incidence of notifiable conditions  
13 within the local health jurisdiction and determining when the incidence  
14 of notifiable conditions exceeds the rate that would be expected within  
15 the particular jurisdiction; and

16            (b) Manner and content for informing the public within the local  
17 health jurisdiction's territory as notifiable conditions exceed the  
18 rate that would be expected. The department shall identify factors to  
19 consider when determining the appropriate level of public notification

1 such as the risk to the public from the notifiable condition, the  
2 duration of the higher incidence of the notifiable condition, the  
3 extent of the increased incidence, the cost-effectiveness of various  
4 options, and the balancing of the need to keep the public informed  
5 without creating either undue concern or diminished receptivity to  
6 severe public health risks.

7 (2) In developing the guidelines, the department shall establish a  
8 temporary work group of public health officials, representatives of  
9 local media establishments, and the public.

10 (3) For purposes of this section:

11 (a) "Local health jurisdiction" means a county board of health  
12 organized under chapter 70.05 RCW, a health district organized under  
13 chapter 70.46 RCW, or a combined city-county health department  
14 organized under chapter 70.08 RCW.

15 (b) "Notifiable condition" means a disease or condition that the  
16 state board of health has determined to be of public health importance  
17 and must be reported to either the local health officer or the  
18 department.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.05 RCW  
20 to read as follows:

21 (1) By July 1, 2014, each local board of health shall adopt a  
22 community health alert notification plan that establishes the method by  
23 which the local health department, health district, or combined city-  
24 county health department shall keep the public who reside in its  
25 jurisdiction informed of variations in the incidence of notifiable  
26 conditions that exceeds the rate that would be expected. The plan must  
27 address the elements identified in section 1 of this act and must give  
28 consideration to the guidance established by the department.

29 (2) The plan must be made available to the public on the web site  
30 of each local health department.

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