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**HOUSE BILL 2396**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives McBride, Caldier, Senn, Goodman, Kagi, Sawyer, Tharinger, Tarleton, Stanford, Farrell, Moscoso, and Ormsby

AN ACT Relating to access to nonemergency, outpatient, primary health care services for unaccompanied homeless youth under the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act; and amending RCW 7.70.065.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 7.70.065 and 2007 c 156 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Informed consent for health care for a patient who is not competent, as defined in RCW 11.88.010(1)(e), to consent may be obtained from a person authorized to consent on behalf of such patient.

(a) Persons authorized to provide informed consent to health care on behalf of a patient who is not competent to consent, based upon a reason other than incapacity as defined in RCW 11.88.010(1)(d), shall be a member of one of the following classes of persons in the following order of priority:

(i) The appointed guardian of the patient, if any;

(ii) The individual, if any, to whom the patient has given a durable power of attorney that encompasses the authority to make health care decisions;

(iii) The patient's spouse or state registered domestic partner;

(iv) Children of the patient who are at least eighteen years of age;

(v) Parents of the patient; and

(vi) Adult brothers and sisters of the patient.

(b) If the health care provider seeking informed consent for proposed health care of the patient who is not competent to consent under RCW 11.88.010(1)(e), other than a person determined to be incapacitated because he or she is under the age of majority and who is not otherwise authorized to provide informed consent, makes reasonable efforts to locate and secure authorization from a competent person in the first or succeeding class and finds no such person available, authorization may be given by any person in the next class in the order of descending priority. However, no person under this section may provide informed consent to health care:

(i) If a person of higher priority under this section has refused to give such authorization; or

(ii) If there are two or more individuals in the same class and the decision is not unanimous among all available members of that class.

(c) Before any person authorized to provide informed consent on behalf of a patient not competent to consent under RCW 11.88.010(1)(e), other than a person determined to be incapacitated because he or she is under the age of majority and who is not otherwise authorized to provide informed consent, exercises that authority, the person must first determine in good faith that that patient, if competent, would consent to the proposed health care. If such a determination cannot be made, the decision to consent to the proposed health care may be made only after determining that the proposed health care is in the patient's best interests.

(2) Informed consent for health care, including mental health care, for a patient who is not competent, as defined in RCW 11.88.010(1)(e), because he or she is under the age of majority and who is not otherwise authorized to provide informed consent, may be obtained from a person authorized to consent on behalf of such a patient.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (1)(b) of this section, persons authorized to provide informed consent to health care, including mental health care, on behalf of a patient who is incapacitated, as defined in RCW 11.88.010(1)(e), because he or she is under the age of majority and who is not otherwise authorized to provide informed consent, shall be a member of one of the following classes of persons in the following order of priority:

(i) The appointed guardian, or legal custodian authorized pursuant to Title 26 RCW, of the minor patient, if any;

(ii) A person authorized by the court to consent to medical care for a child in out-of-home placement pursuant to chapter 13.32A or 13.34 RCW, if any;

(iii) Parents of the minor patient;

(iv) The individual, if any, to whom the minor's parent has given a signed authorization to make health care decisions for the minor patient; and

(v) A competent adult representing himself or herself to be a relative responsible for the health care of such minor patient or a competent adult who has signed and dated a declaration under penalty of perjury pursuant to RCW 9A.72.085 stating that the adult person is a relative responsible for the health care of the minor patient. Such declaration shall be effective for up to six months from the date of the declaration.

(b)(i) Informed consent for health care for a patient under the age of majority may be obtained from a school nurse, counselor, or homeless student liaison when:

(A) Consent is necessary for nonemergency, outpatient, primary care services, including physical examinations, vision examinations and eyeglasses, dental examinations, hearing examinations, and hearing aids, immunizations, treatments for illnesses and conditions, and routine follow-up care customarily provided by a health care provider in an outpatient setting, excluding elective surgeries;

(B) The patient meets the definition of a "homeless child or youth" under the federal McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance improvements act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, January 8, 2002, 115 Stat. 2005; and

(C) The patient is not under the supervision or control of a parent, custodian, or legal guardian.

(ii) A person consenting to care under this subsection (2)(b) and the person's employing school are not liable for any care or payment for any care rendered pursuant to this section.

(iii) A person consenting to care under this subsection (2)(b) must provide written notice of his or her exemption from liability under this subsection (2)(b) to the person providing care.

(c) A health care provider may, but is not required to, rely on the representations or declaration of a person claiming to be a relative responsible for the care of the minor patient, under (a)(v) of this subsection, if the health care provider does not have actual notice of the falsity of any of the statements made by the person claiming to be a relative responsible for the health care of the minor patient.

((~~(c)~~)) (d) A health care facility or a health care provider may, in its discretion, require documentation of a person's claimed status as being a relative responsible for the health care of the minor patient. However, there is no obligation to require such documentation.

((~~(d)~~)) (e) The health care provider or health care facility where services are rendered shall be immune from suit in any action, civil or criminal, or from professional or other disciplinary action when such reliance is based on a declaration signed under penalty of perjury pursuant to RCW 9A.72.085 stating that the adult person is a relative responsible for the health care of the minor patient under (a)(v) of this subsection.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "health care," "health care provider," and "health care facility" shall be defined as established in RCW 70.02.010.

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