

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5122

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2023

Title: An act relating to extending the expiration date of the ambulance transport fund.

Brief Description: Extending the expiration date of the ambulance transport fund.

Sponsors: Senators Cleveland, Muzzall, Van De Wege and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 1/17/23, 1/19/23 [DP].

Ways & Means: 1/31/23 [w/oRec].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/15/23, 48-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date for the ambulance transport quality assurance fee program to July 1, 2028.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Cleveland, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Rivers, Ranking Member; Muzzall, Assistant Ranking Member; Conway, Dhingra, Holy, Padden, Randall and Van De Wege.

Staff: Julie Tran (786-7283)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Mullet, Vice Chair, Capital; Wilson, L., Ranking Member, Operating; Gildon, Assistant

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Ranking Member, Operating; Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital; Rivers, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Billig, Boehnke, Braun, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Muzzall, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Torres, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Wellman.

Staff: Sandy Stith (786-7710)

Background: In 2020, the Legislature created the ambulance transport quality assurance fee program (program), which applies to private ambulance transport providers (providers). The program requires providers to pay the fee for each emergency ambulance transport and each provider is required to submit certain data to the Health Care Authority (HCA).

The quality assurance fee rate is calculated based on transport and gross receipts data that HCA receives from providers. HCA applies an add-on to increase the Medicaid reimbursement for provider's emergency ambulance transports. The add-on must only be funded from the fees and interest earned on the fees, and federal reimbursement or other related federal funds.

For state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, the annual quality assurance fee rate is calculated by the product of the projected aggregate fee schedule amount divided by 90 percent of the projected total annual ambulance transports by all providers.

The program's fund is known as the ambulance transport fund and is in the custody of the state treasury. The fund must retain its interest and must only be used to receive and disburse funds in accordance with the program.

Summary of Bill: The program expiration date is extended from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2028.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Health & Long Term Care): PRO: There is a national crisis leading to some communities actually losing ambulance transport services due to the fact that companies are being forced out of business because of the worsening economic conditions. We in the private industry have to write a check to go out and help people. It's not sustainable for us and pretty soon, it isn't going to happen anymore. This bill extends the program to ensure that communities in our state won't have to face that same loss of service.

This program has provided us the support that we need to manage the operations and also helps us get out to the remote areas on the peninsula. Over the past few years, this program has allowed us to invest in our employees, invest in their education, and retain our employees. It has helped us attract paramedics and EMTs from outside the areas that want to come work in Washington because of the changes that we have been able to make.

Persons Testifying (Health & Long Term Care): PRO: Senator Annette Cleveland, Prime Sponsor; Mike Battis, Washington Ambulance Association; Rocco Roncarati, American Medical Response; Mark Streuli, Olympic Ambulance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Health & Long Term Care): PRO: Joey Rodrigues, Olympic Ambulance; Joey Rodriguez, Olympic Ambulance.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): N/A

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): N/A