

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6516

As Passed House - Amended
March 1, 1994

Title: An act relating to the award for excellence in health care.

Brief Description: Creating the Warren Featherstone Reid award for excellence in health care.

Sponsors: Senators West, Talmadge, Moyer, Snyder and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 25, 1994, DPA.
Passed House - Amended, March 1, 1994, 70-27.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Conway; Flemming; Lemmon; Mastin; Morris and Veloria.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Backlund and Cooke.

Staff: Bill Hagens (786-7131).

Background: The debate over how to organize, finance and deliver personal health services has raged in Washington State and at the national level since Franklin Delano Roosevelt first suggested a national health plan as part of the New Deal in the 1930s. During much of that time, our state has been a leader and innovator. Seattle and Spokane are not only recognized as northwest regional capitals of medical research and training, with facilities such as the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Warren G. Magnuson Health Sciences Center, they also serve as home to Group Health Cooperative, internationally known as a model health maintenance organization.

Our rural areas as well have contributed greatly to our state's heritage as a leader in health policy and practice. Yakima County is the home of the first city/county health department in the United States. And our state's network of

rural hospitals and training programs for health care providers in rural and medically underserved areas rank with the best developed in the nation.

Passage of the Washington Health Services Act of 1993 once again placed our state at the forefront of health care system innovation. But many are concerned that the act's emphasis on universal access to care and cost containment may compromise the quality of health care our citizens enjoy. Some have suggested that regular public recognition of extraordinary efforts to maintain quality in health care can have a sentinel effect. As providers see these examples of quality, they will emulate them, thereby improving quality overall.

Naming such an award for a long time state legislative and congressional staff person whose career was dedicated to improved health care practice and availability has been suggested as appropriate to the purpose of the award.

Warren Featherstone Reid was raised in Wenatchee, Washington, and educated at Wenatchee Community College and George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He received his J.D. in 1961 from the University of Washington. "Feather" joined the staff of the Washington State Legislature in 1955 and remained in public service until 1993, when he retired from the Washington State Senate staff. During that time, he served our state as congressional aide, staff to the state Legislature, trusted advisor to Senator Warren G. Magnuson, and Governor Booth Gardner, and policy expert for countless state and federal officials.

During his career, Mr. Reid assisted Senator Magnuson for almost 20 years as his trusted aid and chief of staff in a sustained effort to advance the science and practice of medicine by expanding federal financial support for medical research through the National Cancer Institute, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, and by helping to establish the Nurse Training Act, the National Health Service Corps, and the National Health Manpower Act. He advised Congress on countless health policy initiatives including Medicare and Medicaid.

Upon his return to the Washington State Senate in 1981, Feather became staff for Senator Jim McDermott and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, specializing in health policy. In 1988, he became a key health policy advisor to Governor Booth Gardner. His efforts were central in several Washington State efforts to improve health care until his retirement in 1993. These included development of the Basic Health Plan, modifications to the Hospital Commission,

changes to the manner in which the state purchases health care and passage of the Washington Health Services Act of 1993.

Feather is presently pursuing the life of a retired gentleman of the first order and continues to travel extensively.

Summary of Bill: The Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care is created to recognize cost-effective and quality health care services.

The Governor, in conjunction with the secretary of the Department of Health, is required to identify and honor health care providers and facilities in Washington state who exhibit exceptional quality and value in the delivery of health services. The award shall be given annually consistent with the availability of qualified nominees. The secretary may appoint an advisory committee to assist in the selection of nominees, if necessary.

The secretary is required to develop the application and approval process, review applications, and make recommendations to the governor. The department is encouraged to use existing boards, committees, and professional associations to disseminate award information.

Award criteria include consumer satisfaction, quality assurance, cost-effective service delivery, creative and innovative delivery practices, and leadership.

All health care providers and facilities that provide health services in Washington state are eligible to receive the award.

The act shall be implemented consistent with the availability of funds. The secretary is directed to seek, and authorized to accept, grants and gifts necessary for this purpose.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The award is an excellent way to promote positive developments in our health care system. Feather Reid is an excellent personification of efforts towards outstanding quality in health care.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Talmadge (pro); Senator West, prime sponsor (pro); Kris Van Gorkom, Department of Health (support concept); Sam Hunt, Bumblebees (pro); and Sir Humphrey Appleby (pro).