
**Health Care & Wellness
Committee**

HB 1837

Brief Description: Directing the department of health to develop guidelines for the transport of nonambulatory persons in a vehicle not licensed under chapter 18.73 RCW.

Sponsors: Representatives Newhouse, Cody and Schual-Berke.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the use of non-ambulance vehicles to transport individuals in a stretcher according to Department of Health guidelines.

Hearing Date: 2/13/07

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Ambulance services are licensed by the Department of Health. Ambulance services must meet certain standards for their vehicles relating to personnel, equipment, and vehicle safety.

Patients who must be carried on a stretcher or who may require medical attention en route, may only be transported by an ambulance. In 2005, the Legislature passed HB 1237 (chapter 193) which specified that a stretcher does not include personal mobility devices that are owned or leased for a period of at least one week.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Health (Department), in consultation with the state's emergency medical program directors, shall adopt guidelines to determine when it is appropriate to use a non-ambulance vehicle to transport an individual on a stretcher who is being discharged from a hospital or nursing home. The guidelines must:

- assist hospital, nursing home, and vehicle personnel in identifying individuals with potential medical needs en route;

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- determine which personnel at a hospital or nursing home may decide if an individual may be safely transported in a stretcher by a non-ambulance vehicle; and
- recommend any equipment for non-ambulance vehicles and training for staff to ensure passenger safety.

An exception to the prohibition on using a non-ambulance vehicle to transport patients who must be carried on a stretcher or who may need medical attention en route is made for individuals who are to be transferred from a hospital or nursing home to another medical facility or discharged from medical care if the individual meets the Department's guidelines.

It is specified that non-ambulance vehicles are not required to obtain a license to transport individuals according to the guidelines. The Department may use the guidelines in cases alleging that an inappropriate transport took place, however, it is not required to take disciplinary action for failure to meet training or equipment recommendations.

The Department shall conduct a pilot project in both the eastern and western portions of the state to determine the appropriate standards for transporting individuals on a stretcher. The pilot project is to inform the guidelines regarding identifying individuals who may be safely transported on a stretcher using a non-ambulance vehicle; identifying appropriate medical personnel at hospitals and nursing homes to make transportation decisions; and determining appropriate equipment and training standards. The pilot project shall also study best practices for transporting individuals with disabilities who rely upon personal mobility devices. In addition, the pilot project may identify others who may be safely transported in a prone or supine position in a non-ambulance vehicle. The Department must report to the Legislature on the findings of the pilot project by November 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 12, 2007.

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