

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1848

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to identification for health services applicants.

Brief Description: Requiring identification from health services applicants.

Sponsors: Representatives Curtis, Cody, Hinkle, Condotta, Orcutt, Fromhold, Moeller and Campbell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/19/07, 2/22/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority to enter into data-sharing agreements with Oregon and Idaho to assure the valid residency of applicants for health care services in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, Curtis, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

Medical assistance is available to low-income state residents from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), primarily through the Medicaid program. It is also available through the Basic Health Plan (BHP), a state-sponsored program administered by the Health Care Authority (Authority) to provide subsidized health insurance coverage to low-income state residents who are not eligible for Medicare or institutionalized at the time of enrollment. Basic Health Plan

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Among other requirements, an enrollee in the Basic Health Plan must be a Washington resident. To prove residency, Authority rules require applicants to provide documentation that displays both the applicant's name and address, such as utility bills or rent receipts. If the applicant does not have a physical residence, he or she may submit a signed statement from a person who is providing temporary shelter. In practice, the Authority accepts driver's licenses, voter registration cards, car registrations, mortgage statements, benefits statements from the DSHS, or labels on federal income tax returns.

Authority rules allow it to require additional information for purposes of establishing or verifying eligibility. The rules do not explicitly address providing proof of the applicant's identity.

Medical Assistance Programs

By statute, state general assistance applicants, including those applying for Medicaid or other state medical assistance programs, generally must be state residents and U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted aliens. Although specific requirements vary for medical assistance programs that are funded only by state funds, most programs require proof of residency and identity. The DSHS policies allow applicants to use any proof that is accurate and consistent. As examples, residency may be shown by rental agreements or statements from a landlord, mortgage papers, or utility bills. Identity may be proven by such records as driver's licenses or state identification cards, birth certificates, passports, school records, or alien registration cards.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The DSHS and the Authority must enter into data-sharing agreements with the appropriate agencies in Oregon and Idaho to assure the valid residency of applicants for health care services in Washington. The agreements must include appropriate safeguards related to confidential information.

The agencies must report on the status of data-sharing agreements to the Legislature by November 30, 2007.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill: (1) deletes the requirements in the original bill for applicants to present specified identification and, instead, requires the DSHS and the Authority to enter into data-sharing agreements with Oregon and Idaho to assure the valid residency of applicants for health care services in Washington; and (2) adds a requirement for the agencies to report on the status of the agreements to the Legislature by November 30, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2007.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support with amendment) The substitute bill resolves the problems presented in the original bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support with amendment) Len McComb, Washington State Hospital Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.