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**Health Care & Wellness Committee**

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**HB 2706**

**Brief Description:** Concerning exemption from immunization.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Cody, Bailey, Driscoll, Johnson, Morrell, Hinkle, Green and Kenney; by request of Governor Gregoire.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Revises the form used to exempt a child from school immunizations to include a statement signed by a health care practitioner stating that the practitioner has provided information about the benefits and risks of immunization.

**Hearing Date:** 1/19/10

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103).

**Background:**

Before or on the first day of attendance, children at Washington's public or private schools (preschool through 12th grade) or licensed daycare centers must provide proof of immunization against certain vaccine-preventable diseases as determined by the Washington State Board of Health (BOH). However, a parent or guardian may submit a certification form to exempt a child, in whole or part, if:

- a physician certifies that a particular vaccine is not advisable for the child;
- the parent or guardian certifies that his or her religious beliefs are contrary to the required immunization measures; or
- the parent or guardian certifies that he or she has a philosophical or personal objection to the child's immunization.

Under the BOH rules, the required school immunization schedule includes immunization against 11 diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, German measles, mumps, chickenpox, hepatitis B, influenza type B, and pneumococcal disease.

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*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.*

Nearly all states allow medical and religious exemptions from their school immunization requirements. There are 20 states allowing exemptions based on philosophical objections, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report covering 2007-2008.

**Summary of Bill:**

The certification form used to exempt a child from school immunization requirements is revised. The form must include a statement to be signed by a health care practitioner stating that the health care practitioner gave the person signing the certification form information about the benefits and risks of immunization.

In addition to physicians, the following health care practitioners are permitted to certify a medical exemption from immunization or to sign the statement acknowledging giving information about the risks and benefits of immunization: naturopaths, physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested 1/14/2010.

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