SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6026

As of February 24, 2009

Title: An act relating to the health technology clinical committee's review process.

Brief Description: Concerning the health technology clinical committee's review process.

Sponsors: Senator Keiser.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/23/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: In 2006 the Legislature created the Health Technology Assessment Program to conduct systematic reviews of scientific and medical literature, establish a statewide Health Technology Clinical Committee, and fund evidence-based health technology assessments. The Health Technology Clinical Committee was given the responsibility of reviewing technologies chosen by the administrator of the Health Care Authority (HCA) in consultation with participating agencies and the committee. Criteria were established for choosing the health technologies to be reviewed as well as for the systematic evidence-based assessment of the technology's safety, efficacy, and cost effectiveness. Meetings of the committee are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. In making its determinations the committee must consider evidence in an open and transparent process, and provide an opportunity for public comment.

Summary of Bill: Interested parties must be provided with an opportunity to submit information to the committee before any health technology may be selected for review. This can include information about studies currently in process. This comment period begins when the committee publishes an explanation of the technology under consideration and must last for 30 days. Before the draft assessment report for a health technology is published the committee must issue a written report responding to the comments submitted during the 30 day comment period. For each health technology scheduled for review the committee must provide an opportunity for public testimony and must provide 30-days notice before meeting. If the committee makes a determination regarding a selected health technology which is not consistent with decisions made under the federal Medicare program

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or expert treatment guidelines, the committee must address in writing the reasons for not following these decisions or guidelines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: This is a solution in search of a problem. The current process is adequate; we think the existing timelines are fair.

OTHER: We have concerns about the process used and would like a practitioner with experience with the technology being evaluated to be part of the process. We support evidence-based medicine. We think that when expert treatment guidelines are not adopted there should be more detail about the reasons why. The public comment timeframes should be longer for review of the extensive materials put out by the committee. We already allow for public comment at six different points in the process. Our program is a national model.

Persons Testifying: CON: Dave Kaplan, Washington Self Insurance Association; Joe King, Group Health Cooperative.

OTHER: Becky Bogard, Medtronic; Bill Struyk, Johnson and Johnson; Clif Finch, Abbott; Dennis Martin, Leah Hole-Curry, HCA.