

---

**SENATE BILL 5854**

---

**State of Washington**

**54th Legislature**

**1995 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Haugen, Spanel, Wood, Prentice, Winsley, Rasmussen, Hale, Kohl, McCaslin, Fairley, Long, Loveland, Franklin, Roach, Moyer, Quigley, McAuliffe, Drew and Wojahn

Read first time 02/09/95. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to women's health care; adding a new section to  
2 chapter 48.01 RCW; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) The specialty of obstetrics/gynecology is devoted to the  
6 preventive health care of women throughout their lifetime;

7 (2) Significant numbers of women view their obstetrician/  
8 gynecologist as their primary or only physician. For many women an  
9 obstetrician/gynecologist is often the only physician they see  
10 regularly during their reproductive years. According to a 1993 Gallup  
11 poll, women are more likely to have had a physician examination within  
12 the last two years from an obstetrician/gynecologist than from any  
13 other type of physician, and a majority of these women consider their  
14 obstetrician/gynecologist to be their primary care physician;

15 (3) A general medical examination was the second most frequently  
16 cited purpose for patient visits to obstetricians/gynecologists in 1989  
17 and 1990, accounting for seven million visits each year, according to  
18 data gathered by the National Center for Health Statistics;

1 (4) Women are opposed to restrictions in accessing obstetricians/  
2 gynecologists. Among women who have health coverage, a Gallup poll  
3 reported that seventy-eight percent can currently access their  
4 obstetrician/gynecologist without going through a gatekeeper. Seventy-  
5 five percent of these women would object to requirements that they be  
6 referred by another physician or gatekeeper before they may see their  
7 obstetrician/gynecologist. Similarly seventy-four percent of those who  
8 now have restricted access to obstetricians/gynecologists would approve  
9 of a system that would eliminate the need for a referral;

10 (5) Obstetricians/gynecologists refer their patients less  
11 frequently than other primary care physicians, avoiding costly and  
12 time-consuming referrals to specialists; and

13 (6) More than two-thirds of all visits to obstetricians/  
14 gynecologists were made by established patients of the physician  
15 returning for care of their condition according to data gathered by the  
16 National Center for Health Statistics. Only four and seven-tenths  
17 percent of patient visits resulted from referrals from another  
18 physician.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 48.01 RCW  
20 to read as follows:

21 Health care services provided under a plan as defined in RCW  
22 43.72.010 or by a provider network must include identification of  
23 obstetricians and gynecologists who may be chosen as primary care  
24 providers by enrollees. "Primary care provider" as used in this  
25 section means that health care provider a person first consults and may  
26 include a person who refers a patient to another provider.  
27 Obstetricians and gynecologists under this section must be graduated  
28 from a school approved and accredited by the medical care quality  
29 assurance commission under chapter 18.71 RCW.

--- END ---