

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5471

As of February 6, 1997

Title: An act relating to osteoporosis health services coverage.

Brief Description: Providing for osteoporosis health services coverage.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Deccio, Thibaudeau, Winsley, Bauer, Long, Franklin, Kline, Loveland, Jacobsen, Snyder, Kohl, Spanel, Fraser, Fairley, McAuliffe and Brown.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/11/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Osteoporosis is a devastating disease, which causes a thinning of the bones and often leads to severe fractures. These fractures cause pain, disability, immobility and threaten the independence of the 25 million Americans that suffer from the disease.

Osteoporosis affects approximately 50 percent of women and 20 percent of men. The direct and indirect costs of osteoporosis in the United States was \$18 billion in 1993, and is expected to rise to \$60 to 80 billion by 2020.

Osteoporosis commonly progresses without symptoms and remains undiagnosed until it has advanced to the point that the patient suffers fracture, typically of the hip, spine or wrist.

Since there is no cure for osteoporosis, prevention, treatment and early detection are critical for reducing prevalence.

There are several screening methods currently available to detect osteoporosis, and treatment regimes that can mitigate the effects of osteoporosis.

Concern exists that the existing screening and treatment methods are not being used adequately because many health insurers do not provide benefits for them. It has been suggested that screening and treatment are cost effective because they result in a decrease in fractures and disability, which corresponds to significant savings in associated health care costs.

Summary of Bill: All state purchased health care that provides hospital, medical or surgical coverage must include coverage for osteoporosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment services.

All insurers that provide hospital, medical or surgical coverage are required to cover osteoporosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment services. They are also required to use

current education materials to increase patient awareness and encourage prevention of osteoporosis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 1997.

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