

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## EHB 1845

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Providing for vocational rehabilitation benefits under industrial insurance.

**Sponsors:** Representatives B. Chandler, Clements, McMorris, Lisk, Conway and Wood.

**House Committee on Commerce & Labor**

**Senate Committee on Labor & Workforce Development**

**Background:**

The Department of Labor and Industries is authorized to pay, and may direct self-insured employers to pay, the costs of vocational rehabilitation services for injured workers when these services are necessary and likely to enable the injured worker to become employable at gainful employment. These costs are limited to \$3,000 in a 52-week period and include the cost of books, tuition, fees, supplies, equipment, transportation, child or dependent care, and other necessary expenses. The department may extend the period of benefits for an additional 52 weeks.

**Summary:**

Beginning with vocational rehabilitation plans approved on or after July 1, 1999, the maximum amount that the Department of Labor and Industries may pay, or order a self-insurer to pay, for an injured worker's vocational rehabilitation benefits in a 52-week period is increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000. (The new limit also applies if a second year of benefits is authorized.)

The expenditure limit no longer applies to the injured worker's transportation costs.

The department is required to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the benefit increase, including an examination of benefit utilization and vocational results. The analysis must be reported to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Committee and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by November 1, 2001.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 98 0

Senate 47 0

**Effective:** July 25, 1999