

ANALYSIS OF HOUSE BILL 2570

Establishing an advisory board for boarding homes.

SPONSORS: Representatives Edmonds and Pennington.

BACKGROUND: The 1998 Legislature transferred responsibility for all boarding home quality assurance activities, including licensing, technical assistance, and complaint investigation/resolution from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The transfer is set to expire on July 1, 2000 unless reauthorized by the Legislature.

In 1998 the Washington State Legislature established a Joint Legislative and Executive Task Force on Long-term Care. One of the twelve specific duties of the Task Force was to evaluate the success of the boarding home program transfer, and to determine whether additional changes should be made. The Task Force established a stakeholders subcommittee made up of consumers, advocates, providers, and the DSHS. In addition to recommending that the boarding home oversight program should remain with the DSHS, they also recommended that current efforts to collaborate on policy and regulatory issues should be continued through the establishment of an ongoing process for the evaluation of boarding home oversight to ensure that resident independence, choice, dignity, and safety are kept at the forefront.

Currently, the State Council on Aging is the only advisory board established that is mandated to deal with this issue on a limited basis. The State Council on Aging is established by the DSHS and authorized to advise the Governor on all matters concerning policies, programs, and services affecting older persons.

SUMMARY: The secretary of the department is responsible for licensing boarding homes and is authorized to designate an advisory board on matters affecting the boarding home program. (The designating authority can be either the DSHS or the Department of Health (DOH) depending on pending legislative action on the transfer of administrative and licensure authority)

Membership of the advisory board is outlined and must include representatives of: the statewide boarding home associations, the state long-term care ombudsman program, the state resident council program, family representatives, and other representatives depending on the topic to be discussed.

Meetings are to be held quarterly. The expected issues to be discussed include, but are not limited to, the department's inspection, enforcement, and quality improvement activities, the promulgation of rules and standards, implementation of programs and procedures, methods and rates of payment, and the issuance of guidelines.