

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5739

As Passed House - Amended:

March 1, 2000

Title: An act relating to certificates of death or fetal death.

Brief Description: Preparing certificates of death or fetal death.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/17/00, 2/25/00 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/1/00, 98-0.

Senate Concurred.

Passed Senate: 2/2/00, 44-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows funeral directors or coroners to accept a certificate of death signed by an advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician's assistant.
- Requires that the Washington State Forensic Investigation Council develop a protocol for autopsies of children whose death was sudden and unexplained.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken; Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

The Washington Administrative Code (departmental rules) authorizes physicians' assistants to sign and attest to death certificates. The Administrative Code also gives an advanced registered nurse practitioner-certified midwife the authority to certify death or fetal death. These responsibilities, however, are not currently reflected in the Revised Code of Washington's (laws) provisions regarding the coroner's ability to accept the signature of physician assistants and advanced registered nurses on death certificates.

Summary of Bill:

A funeral director or person in charge of interment is allowed to accept a certificate of death signed by a physician's assistant or an advanced registered nurse practitioner to certify death or fetal death when he or she is the last person in attendance of the deceased.

Requires that the Washington association of coroners and medical examiners and the criminal justice training commission include a training module which specifically addresses the investigations of the sudden unexplained deaths of children under the age of three, that a similar training curriculum be required for city and county law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel certified by the Department of Health as part of their basic training, that the Washington State Forensic Investigation Council develop a protocol for autopsies of children under the age of three whose deaths are sudden and unexplained, and that when a county bears the cost of an autopsy of a child under the age of three whose death was sudden and unexplained, the county must be reimbursed for the expenses of the autopsy if certain circumstances are met.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This measure will expedite the process for death certificates especially for rural areas of the state that do not have physicians.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jeff Larsen, Washington Academy of Physicians Assistants; and Jerri Henry, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners United.