

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5968

As Passed House:
April 25, 1999

Title: An act relating to human services.

Brief Description: Requiring supplemental payments to nursing facilities operated by public hospital districts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Loveland and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/25/99, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Implements "pro-share" Medicaid provision, which allows state to obtain additional federal funds for publicly-funded health services.

Staff: Bill Hagens (786-7131).

Background:

There are 14 public hospital districts in the state which operate nursing facilities. All 14 are in rural areas, where they serve an average community population of approximately 6,000. As a group, these 14 rural hospital districts reported operating losses of \$5 million in 1997, of which \$3.5 million was covered by local tax levies.

Federal law allows state Medicaid payment rates for nursing home services to equal, but not exceed, federal Medicare rates. Washington's Medicaid payment rates are presently about \$55 million per year lower than if all nursing facilities were paid at the Medicare rate. Federal law also allows local governmental units to transfer funds to the state to serve as the state match for federal Medicaid payments. At least three states have used these two provisions of federal law to provide extra funding for

publicly-operated nursing facilities, while at the same time generating extra revenue for other publicly-funded services.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to make supplemental payments to nursing facilities operated by public hospital districts. These payments are only to be made if approved by the federal government, and in accordance with terms and conditions in the biennial appropriations act. These supplemental payments are not subject to other statutory requirements governing nursing home rate-setting and settlement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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