

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1759

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### PARTIAL VETO

C 213 L 02

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Allowing for the sale of hypodermic syringes and needles to reduce the transmission of blood-borne diseases.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Darneille, Schual-Berke, McDermott, Santos, Murray, Tokuda and Wood).

**House Committee on Health Care**

**Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care**

#### **Background:**

Approximately 41,000 injection drug users live in Washington. Injection drug users are at a high risk of blood-borne infections, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the hepatitis B and C virus. Injection drug users account for approximately 21 percent of the state's acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases. The sharing of syringes leads to the transmission of these debilitating and costly diseases.

State law prohibits a pharmacist from selling clean syringes unless they can satisfy themselves that the device will be used for the legal use intended.

In 2000 the Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse issued a joint report entitled: "Prevention of Blood-Borne Infections." The report recommended allowing access to sterile syringes as a way to reduce the spread of blood-borne infections among injection drug users. Other specific recommendations include:

1. Amend RCW 70.115.050 and RCW 69.50.4121 to allow for the pharmaceutical sale of sterile syringes.
  - Sales limited to 10 syringes.
  - Sales limited to individuals at least 18 years old.
  - Pharmacists should be required to provide drug prevention and treatment materials at the point of sale.
2. Amend RCW 69.50.421 to allow for the limited possession and sale of sterile syringes for legitimate public health purposes.

**Summary:**

Individuals over 18 years of age may possess sterile syringes to use in reducing the transmission of blood-borne diseases. Injection syringe equipment may be distributed through pharmacies. Pharmacists may provide drug prevention and treatment materials at the point of sale. Sterile syringes sold under this act will be exchanged for used syringes.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 75 22

Senate 32 16 (Senate amended)

House 66 31 (House concurred)

**Effective:** June 13, 2002

**Partial Veto Summary:** The Governor vetoed the requirement that the number of syringes and needles sold cannot exceed the number of used syringes and needles returned at the time of sale. The requirements that syringes and needles only be sold to individuals over 18 years of age, and pharmacies provide materials related to drug prevention and treatment and safe disposal techniques are vetoed.