

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1759

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the sale of hypodermic syringes.

Brief Description: Allowing for the sale of hypodermic syringes and needles to reduce the transmission of bloodborne diseases.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/7/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/19/02, 75-22.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/7/02, 32-16.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 3/12/02, 66-31.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows access to sterile syringes as a way to reduce the spread of blood-borne infections.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Schual-Berke, Vice Chair; Campbell, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Ballasiotes, Conway, Darneille, Edwards, Ruderman and Skinner.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Benson.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Approximately 41,000 injection drug users live in Washington. Injection drug users are at high risk of blood borne infections, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B and C virus. They 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.

Current 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.
 - a. Sales limited to 10 syringes.
 - b. Sales limited to individuals at least 18 years old.
 - c. 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 of Substitute Bill:

Individuals over 18 years of age may possess sterile syringes to use in reducing the transmission of bloodborne 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.