

Health Care Committee

SSB 5184

Brief Description: Reporting investigations of vulnerable adult abuse.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Winsley, Costa and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- *The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is authorized to disclose the results of investigations conducted by the department on people who are working for home health agencies, hospice or home care agencies, programs under contract with the division of developmental disabilities, adult day care or day health programs, and state or local authorities responsible for licensing the entities named in the bill. The alleged perpetrator is notified when the outcome report is released. The victim's name must be withheld.*

Hearing Date: 3/22/01

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

Adult Protective Services (APS) under the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for investigating complaints of abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation or neglect of vulnerable adults and to provide protective services and legal remedies to protect these individuals. The APS investigations determine if the allegation is valid, and if the vulnerable adult is at risk of harm. It is current practice for the DSHS to inform certain agencies and programs of the substantiated findings of these investigations.

There is no law that directly specifies that agencies or programs who may be employing or contracting with the person under investigation be notified.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to disclose the results of investigations conducted by the department on people who are employed, contracted, or volunteering for home health agencies, hospice or home care agencies licensed with the state, and programs under contract with the division of developmental disabilities, adult day care, or day health programs. The result of an investigation can only be disclosed if it has been determined by the department that an incident of abuse, abandonment, financial exploitation, or neglect has occurred. The information disclosed cannot include the identity of the individual who made the complaint or any witness without their permission. The department is also given authority to disclose the investigation findings to state or local authorities responsible for licensing the entities named in the bill. The alleged perpetrator is notified when the outcome report is released. The victim's name must be withheld.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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