

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1633

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, April 10, 2001

Title: An act relating to technical corrections to chapters 79 and 80, Laws of 2000.

Brief Description: Making technical corrections to provisions concerning the individual health insurance market.

Sponsors: By Representatives Campbell and Cody; by request of Insurance Commissioner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 4/10/01 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Deccio, Fraser, Parlette and Winsley.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: In 2000, the Legislature passed SB 6067 and HB 3154, which made numerous changes to the statutes governing the individual health insurance market. The changes were designed to address issues raised by private health carriers who had withdrawn from the individual market. In implementing the legislation, a number of technical errors and ambiguities have been identified, as were some conflicts with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Summary of Amended Bill: A number of technical corrections and clarifications are made in state statutes governing the individual health insurance market. Among others, these include replacing incorrect wording, adding or correcting definitions, and clarifying ambiguous language. Provisions are also added, primarily regarding portability between health plans, to put state law in compliance with HIPAA.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Senate striking amendment adds language intended to address HIPAA compliance issues and removes language regarding the eligibility of Medicare beneficiaries for the Washington State Health Insurance Pool. It also adds an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The amended bill will be helpful in the administration of the new individual market law. It will enable OIC to avoid "imaginative" interpretations of the statute in the course of rule writing, and will assure that the act is implemented as completely and fully as possible. The OIC has worked closely with all stakeholders to make sure the bill is agreed to and addresses only technical issues.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Kreidler, Insurance Commissioner (pro).