

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6590

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 6, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to improving K-12 preparedness and performance through promoting better oral health.

**Brief Description:** Improving K-12 preparedness and performance through promoting better oral health.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Rossi and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/02, 2/6/02 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6590 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

**Background:** Dental disease is the most common chronic childhood disease in this country. Most forms of the disease are preventable, especially early childhood dental disease commonly called baby bottle tooth decay. When children have poor oral health and decay is undiagnosed and untreated, the result can be serious, painful and expensive.

Increasing access to oral health care for children is one way of reducing the incidence of dental disease. One way of improving access is to offer opportunities in medical settings, since children who never visit dental offices are still likely to see physicians and other health care providers.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are encouraged to work collaboratively to develop a plan that promotes age appropriate oral health screenings and preventive services to children before entering school. DSHS is encouraged to design and implement a training program for primary care providers on preventive oral health care. The trainings should complement existing mandates for oral health exams in public programs.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Physician assistants and nurse practitioners were added to the primary care providers considered in this act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Taking steps to address the epidemic of dental disease in kids is very important.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Greg Pierce, contract lobbyist; Don Brunell, AWB; Diane Weibling, family support worker; Sean Pickard, Washington Dental Service; Melissa Johnson, WA State Dental Hygienists Assn.