

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1463

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to meningococcal immunization.

Brief Description: Requiring schools to provide information on meningococcal immunization.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Green, Rodne, Cody and Moeller).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/11/05, 2/15/05 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/05, 95-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/13/05, 48-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that public and private schools provide the parents and guardians of students with information about meningococcal disease at the beginning of every school year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Hinkle, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Meningitis is an infection and inflammation of the membranes and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis is most frequently caused by either bacteria or viruses. The bacterial variety is usually the most serious. Meningitis must be treated immediately to lessen the effects of any potential complications.

Meningococcus is a highly contagious bacterial form of meningitis. It can lead to brain damage, hearing loss, and learning disabilities. It kills about 300 people every year. The

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that between 1991 and 1997 the number of cases of meningococcal meningitis doubled for people 15 to 24 years old. Common living situations for people in these age groups such as college dormitories, boarding schools, and military bases are at a higher risk for outbreaks of the disease. In February 2005, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended that all college freshmen living in a dormitory and all 11 to 12-year-old children receive a vaccination for the disease.

While proof of immunization for meningococcal meningitis is not required for admission to school, meningococcal meningitis is a notifiable condition that health care providers and facilities must report to the local health department immediately and laboratories must report within two days.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

All public and private schools must provide the parents and guardians of students in sixth grade and above with information about meningococcal disease at the beginning of every school year. The information must address the characteristics of the disease; where to find additional information about the disease and vaccinations for children; and current recommendations from the CDC regarding receiving the vaccine.

The Department of Health (Department) is responsible for the preparation of the informational materials in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There is no requirement that the Department or schools provide the vaccination to students.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment removes the authority of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt rules to implement the requirement that schools distribute meningococcal information. The amendment also removes the requirement that the Superintendent annually attest that the program has been implemented.

The amendment requires that the Department of Health prepare the meningococcal information materials, rather than being consulted in the preparation of the materials.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2005.

Testimony For: This bill will provide information about meningococcal disease that can prevent its deadly, disabling, and costly effects.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor; and Stu Halsan, Sanofi Pasteur.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.