

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5496

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 21, 2005

Title: An act relating to inspection of hospitals.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for inspection of hospitals.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Brandland, Parlette, Benson, Deccio and Mulliken; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/7/05, 2/21/05 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: The Department of Health (DOH) is required to annually inspect all hospitals. During a 2003 review, the state auditor found DOH to be out of compliance with this requirement, and recommended that either the requirement be changed, or funding be provided so that it could be met.

Historically, DOH has averaged about 20 months between inspections without evidence of an increased risk to patient health and safety. The current annual requirement exceeds both federal and private accreditation standards.

Hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations or the American Osteopathic Association are exempt from DOH inspection requirements.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health is required to inspect all hospitals at least every eighteen months.

Language regarding the exemption from DOH inspection requirements is simplified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The Department of Health does not have the resources to meet the current requirement that hospital inspections be done annually. It will be able to meet an 18-month requirement, and focus in particular on those facilities with problems. This schedule will also allow for better follow-up. The bill will allow the Department to synchronize its inspection efforts with that of private accreditation organizations.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health; PRO with CONCERNS: Len McComb, Washington State Hospital Association.