

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1021

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 26, 2009

Title: An act relating to prior notice of hospital surveys and audits.

Brief Description: Concerning notice of hospital audits.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health & Human Services Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Campbell, Morrell and Moeller).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/09, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/25/09, 3/26/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: State agencies, including the Department of Health (DOH), conduct hospital surveys and audits in order to enforce standards and rules required for the safe care and treatment of patients. An audit entails an examination of records or financial accounts to evaluate accuracy and monitor compliance with statutory or regulatory requirements. A survey involves an inspection, examination, or site visit conducted by an agency.

Agencies may be required to give prior notice of an audit or survey unless the agency is responding to a complaint or immediate public health and safety concerns or when such prior notice would conflict with other state or federal law. Any state agency that provides notice of a hospital survey or audit must provide such notice to the hospital no less than four weeks prior to the date of the survey or audit.

Summary of Bill: When the DOH inspects a hospital, the inspection must be conducted on an unannounced basis. The DOH is prohibited from issuing its final report regarding an unannounced inspection until:

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- the hospital is given at least two weeks to provide any information or documentation requested by the DOH during the inspection that was not available at the time of the request; and
- at least one person from the DOH conducting the inspection meets personally with the chief administrator or executive officer of the hospital following the inspection, or the chief administrator or executive officer declines such a meeting.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Hospitals typically get a one-month notice before a hospital inspection. This bill eliminates that notice, but this may create a hardship for very small hospitals. So by allowing a two-week review period even the smaller hospitals will be able to manage inspections.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Campbell, prime sponsor.