

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2074

As of February 26, 2014

Title: An act relating to fees for health records.

Brief Description: Concerning fees for health records.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Sawyer, Rodne, Jinkins, Pedersen, Kirby, Cody, Hansen and Hargrove).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/14, 84-13.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/25/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Uniform Health Care Information Act governs the disclosure of health care information by health care providers and their agents or employees in Washington. Health care providers may charge a reasonable fee for providing copies of health care records.

A reasonable fee is established in statute as \$0.65 per page for the first 30 pages and \$0.50 per page for any additional pages. A clerical fee of \$15 may also be charged for searching and handling. The amounts must be adjusted every two years according to changes in the Consumer Price Index, as determined by the Secretary of Health. The current adjusted rates, as adopted in rule by the Secretary of Health, are \$1.09 per page for the first 30 pages, \$0.82 per page for all other pages, and a clerical fee of up to \$24.

Summary of Bill: The only fees that a health care provider may charge for the reproduction of health care information and associated clerical activities are the charges established under the Uniform Health Care Information Act.

Health care providers may not charge a fee for responding to a request for documentation related to a patient's bills owed to the provider and for furnishing payment for those bills.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 21, 2014.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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: Health care providers are charging fees outside the statutory scheme. This addresses the most egregious of these practices. In representing people with injuries, bills must be requested. We are getting charged for this billing information. We need to facilitate requests of medical information and ensure that people will not have to pay for this information.

CON: The language in the bill is open to interpretation. Does it mean that the statutory provision contains the fees that may be charged or is it the version that is adopted in rule. If it works as the sponsor intended, we are okay with the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sawyer, prime sponsor; John Ladenburg Jr., Sadler Ladenburg LLP.

CON: Carl Nelson, WA State Medical Assn.