

---

SENATE BILL 6597

---

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senator Keiser

Read first time 01/28/16. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Labor.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a task force on injured workers'  
2 independent medical exams; creating a new section; and providing an  
3 expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) A joint legislative task force on  
6 injured workers' independent medical exams is established, with  
7 members as provided in this subsection.

8 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from  
9 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

10 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint  
11 two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of  
12 representatives.

13 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of  
14 representatives jointly shall appoint five members representing self-  
15 insurers, labor, worker compensation plaintiff and defense attorneys,  
16 and independent medical examiners.

17 (iv) The governor shall appoint two members representing the  
18 department of labor and industries, including one from the ombuds  
19 office.

1 (b) The task force shall choose its cochairs from among its  
2 legislative membership. The legislators shall convene the initial  
3 meeting of the task force.

4 (2) The task force shall:

5 (a) Collect and review specific, reliable data about the  
6 frequency and use of independent medical exams for both state fund  
7 exams and self-insurer exams.

8 (b) Oversee a one-time survey of workers, attending medical  
9 providers, independent medical examiners, and other critical  
10 stakeholders to identify areas of needed improvement.

11 (c) Examine options for increased communication with injured  
12 workers regarding the purpose and need for independent medical exams.

13 (d) Examine options for increased communication with claims  
14 adjusters and attending medical providers with the goal of decreasing  
15 the need for some independent medical exams.

16 (e) Review current independent medical exam certification and  
17 exam processes with the goal of recommending standard reporting  
18 protocols, a quality assurance standard for reports, and required  
19 training standards.

20 (f) Examine the statutes and regulations from other jurisdictions  
21 as they relate to reducing the frequency of independent medical  
22 exams.

23 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the  
24 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of  
25 program research.

26 (4) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for  
27 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative  
28 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they  
29 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,  
30 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for  
31 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

32 (5) The legislative expenses of the task force must be paid  
33 jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Task force  
34 expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and  
35 operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules  
36 committee, or their successor committees. Nonlegislative expenses of  
37 the task force will be paid by the department of labor and industries  
38 out of the medical aid account.

1       (6) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations  
2 to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31,  
3 2016.

4       (7) This section expires July 31, 2017.

--- END ---