

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2990

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to a pilot project for third-party accreditation of boarding homes.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project for third-party accreditation of boarding homes.

Sponsors: Representatives Dyer, Backlund and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/3/98 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/98, 96-0.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; Cody, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Parlette; Sherstad; Wood and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Murray, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Conway.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: Boarding homes are care facilities usually ranging in size from 10-60 residents. Smaller boarding homes are often called group homes and larger ones might be marketed to the public as assisted living facilities. Boarding homes are not just rooming houses. They offer room, board, and personal care or nursing services. Boarding homes are licensed, regulated and inspected by the Department of Health (DOH). There are over 400 boarding homes currently in the state with approximately 16,000 residents. Of this total, only 13 percent of the residents have their care paid by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The remainder of boarding home residents pay for their care from their own resources.

The DOH conducts its comprehensive licensing inspection approximately every 12 months and also responds to individual complaints concerning residents care or the facility. If a violation is found to have occurred, the DOH has the authority to take actions such as consultations, placing conditions on a license, more staff training, stopping admissions, fines, and closing a facility.

Both 1995 and 1996 legislative reports on residents' rights, quality of care, and regulatory enforcement conducted by the Washington State Long-term Care Ombudsman Program found serious concerns with the way in which the DOH conducted investigations under its regulatory oversight. Further concerns have been raised in the ombudsman's 1998 follow-up investigation of the enforcement of safety and care standards in boarding homes. In that follow-up study they again found "widespread problems in the regulatory oversight provided by the state's Department of Health." This 1998 ombudsman report recommended that the Legislature eliminate the dual regulation of boarding homes and transfer jurisdiction of boarding homes to the DSHS.

The DOH is responsible for the development of quality of care standards in boarding homes and the regulatory enforcement of these standards.

Private third party accreditation refers to the quality of care reviews conducted by a private accreditation organization outside of government. Private third party accreditation is conducted for hospitals and in some other health care settings such as home care organizations, ambulatory care providers, and clinical laboratories. Third party accreditation of boarding homes is not currently conducted in Washington or in any other state.

Summary of Bill: A coalition of assisted living providers, long-term care consumer groups, and state regulatory agencies are required to develop a plan for implementing a pilot program for implementing the third party accreditation of boarding homes. The pilot plan is required to review the overall feasibility of implementing a pilot program, indicate the cost savings to the state, the impact on the quality of care, quality of life, and the impact on the boarding home industry. The plan must be submitted to the Legislature by January 4, 1999. The Assisted Living Federation of America is required to provide funding for the pilot plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This measure will allow a diverse group to develop a plan for reviewing the feasibility of using a non-government based standard setting process to maintain the high quality of care in boarding homes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ron Feinberg, Dwayne Clark, and Brian Ward, Northwest Assisted Living Facilities Association (pro).