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HOUSE BILL 1764

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State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Veloria, Dyer, Cody, Mason, Kenney, Lantz, D. Schmidt, Dunn, Clements, Scott, Keiser, Blalock, Costa, Conway, Tokuda and Murray

Read first time 02/07/97. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to incorporating environmental health into the  
2 public health improvement plan; and amending RCW 43.70.520 and  
3 43.70.580.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.70.520 and 1993 c 492 s 467 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that the public health functions of  
8 community assessment, policy development, and assurance of service  
9 delivery are essential elements in achieving the objectives of health  
10 reform in Washington state. The legislature further finds that the  
11 population-based services provided by state and local health  
12 departments are cost-effective and are a critical strategy for the  
13 long-term containment of health care costs. The legislature further  
14 finds that the public health system in the state lacks the capacity to  
15 fulfill these functions consistent with the needs of a reformed health  
16 care system.

17 (2) The department of health shall develop, in consultation with  
18 local health departments and districts, the state board of health, the  
19 health services commission, area Indian health service, and other state

1 agencies, health services providers, and citizens concerned about  
2 public health, a public health services improvement plan. The plan  
3 shall provide a detailed accounting of deficits in the core functions  
4 of assessment, policy development, assurance of the current public  
5 health system, how additional public health funding would be used, and  
6 describe the benefits expected from expanded expenditures.

7 (3) The plan shall include:

8 (a) Definition of minimum standards for public health protection  
9 through assessment, policy development, and assurances:

10 (i) Enumeration of communities not meeting those standards;

11 (ii) A budget and staffing plan for bringing all communities up to  
12 minimum standards;

13 (iii) An analysis of the costs and benefits expected from adopting  
14 minimum public health standards for assessment, policy development, and  
15 assurances;

16 (b) Recommended strategies and a schedule for improving public  
17 health programs throughout the state, including:

18 (i) Strategies for transferring personal health care services from  
19 the public health system, into the uniform benefits package where  
20 feasible; and

21 (ii) Timing of increased funding for public health services linked  
22 to specific objectives for improving public health; (~~and~~)

23 (c) A recommended level of dedicated funding for public health  
24 services to be expressed in terms of a percentage of total health  
25 service expenditures in the state or a set per person amount; such  
26 recommendation shall also include methods to ensure that such funding  
27 does not supplant existing federal, state, and local funds received by  
28 local health departments, and methods of distributing funds among local  
29 health departments; and

30 (d) A summary of federal, state, and local data sources related to  
31 public health, including both personal health and environmental health,  
32 with recommendations to improve interagency coordination and increase  
33 public access to health information.

34 (4) The department shall coordinate this planning process with the  
35 study activities required in section 258, chapter 492, Laws of 1993.

36 (5) By March 1, 1994, the department shall provide initial  
37 recommendations of the public health services improvement plan to the  
38 legislature regarding minimum public health standards, and public

1 health programs needed to address urgent needs, such as those cited in  
2 subsection (7) of this section.

3 (6) By December 1, 1994, the department shall present the public  
4 health services improvement plan to the legislature, with specific  
5 recommendations for each element of the plan to be implemented over the  
6 period from 1995 through 1997.

7 (7) Thereafter, the department shall update the public health  
8 services improvement plan for presentation to the legislature prior to  
9 the beginning of a new biennium.

10 (8) Among the specific population-based public health activities to  
11 be considered in the public health services improvement plan are:  
12 Health data assessment and chronic and infectious disease surveillance;  
13 rapid response to outbreaks of communicable disease; efforts to prevent  
14 and control specific communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and  
15 acquired immune deficiency syndrome; health education to promote  
16 healthy behaviors and to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, such  
17 as those linked to the use of tobacco; access to primary care in  
18 coordination with existing community and migrant health clinics and  
19 other not for profit health care organizations; programs to ensure  
20 children are born as healthy as possible and they receive immunizations  
21 and adequate nutrition; efforts to prevent intentional and  
22 unintentional injury; efforts to assess, monitor, and reduce or  
23 eliminate environmental health risks related to pollutant-emitting  
24 facilities or the accumulation of toxic air or water releases; programs  
25 to ensure the safety of drinking water and food supplies; poison  
26 control; trauma services; and other activities that have the potential  
27 to improve the health of the population or special populations and  
28 reduce the need for or cost of health services.

29 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.70.580 and 1995 c 43 s 3 are each amended to read  
30 as follows:

31 The primary responsibility of the public health system, is to take  
32 those actions necessary to protect, promote, and improve the health of  
33 the population. In order to accomplish this, the department shall:

34 (1) Identify, as part of the public health improvement plan, the  
35 key health outcomes sought for the population and the capacity needed  
36 by the public health system to fulfill its responsibilities in  
37 improving health outcomes.

1 (2)(a) Distribute state funds that, in conjunction with local  
2 revenues, are intended to improve the capacity of the public health  
3 system. The distribution methodology shall encourage system-wide  
4 effectiveness and efficiency and provide local health jurisdictions  
5 with the flexibility both to determine governance structures and  
6 address their unique needs.

7 (b) Enter into with each local health jurisdiction performance-  
8 based contracts that establish clear measures of the degree to which  
9 the local health jurisdiction is attaining the capacity necessary to  
10 improve health outcomes. The contracts negotiated between the local  
11 health jurisdictions and the department of health must identify the  
12 specific measurable progress that local health jurisdictions will make  
13 toward achieving health outcomes. A community assessment conducted by  
14 the local health jurisdiction according to the public health  
15 improvement plan(~~(, which shall include the results of the~~  
16 ~~comprehensive plan prepared according to RCW 70.190.130,)~~) will be used  
17 as the basis for identifying the health outcomes. A community  
18 assessment shall include the following: (i) An assessment of the  
19 demographics, health status, health problems, risk behaviors, and  
20 health system capacity for the county or district; (ii) the results of  
21 the comprehensive plan prepared according to RCW 70.190.130; (iii) an  
22 assessment of community environmental health risks and a plan to reduce  
23 or eliminate these risks; and (iv) a program of public outreach to  
24 involve the community in identifying health problems and formulating  
25 local health policy. The contracts shall include provisions to  
26 encourage collaboration among local health jurisdictions. State funds  
27 shall be used solely to expand and complement, but not to supplant city  
28 and county government support for public health programs.

29 (3) Develop criteria to assess the degree to which capacity is  
30 being achieved and ensure compliance by public health jurisdictions.

31 (4) Adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of chapter 43,  
32 Laws of 1995.

33 (5) Biennially, within the public health improvement plan, evaluate  
34 the effectiveness of the public health system, evaluate the  
35 effectiveness of local health jurisdictions at addressing both personal  
36 and environmental health risks, assess the degree to which the public  
37 health system is attaining the capacity to improve the status of the

1 public's health, and report progress made by each local health  
2 jurisdiction toward improving health outcomes.

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