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SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2854

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State of Washington

57th Legislature

2002 Regular Session

By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Schual-Berke, Haigh, Morris, Barlean, O'Brien, Hurst, Hatfield, Anderson, Chase, Upthegrove and Rockefeller)

Read first time 02/11/2002. Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to planning for public health emergencies arising  
2 from terrorist acts; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW;  
3 creating a new section; providing an expiration date; and declaring an  
4 emergency.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Following the tragic events of September 11,  
7 2001, the government's primary role in protecting the health, safety,  
8 and well-being of its citizens has been underscored. The threat of  
9 biological and chemical agents used for terrorism creates new and  
10 emerging dangers for public health and raises the possibility of mass  
11 civilian exposures and casualties. In addition, the September 11th  
12 attacks demonstrated that other types of terrorist attacks may create  
13 public health emergencies for victims, rescue personnel, government  
14 agencies, and the public.

15 The legislature finds there is a need to focus on the prevention,  
16 detection, management, and containment of public health emergencies  
17 from infectious diseases. The legislature also finds that an effective  
18 communications system is needed to ensure that health care providers  
19 across the state can quickly and efficiently notify and communicate

1 with each other regarding signs and symptoms they may observe that may  
2 be the earliest indications of bioterrorism and terrorist-related  
3 public health emergencies. The legislature also finds that  
4 dissemination of public health information during an emergency is  
5 critical to the functioning and well-being of the public. The  
6 legislature further finds that there is a need to coordinate planning  
7 among government agencies to ensure an effective response to  
8 bioterrorism incidents or other terrorist attacks. The legislature  
9 recognizes that the department of health and human services has  
10 recently awarded funding to the department of health to develop a  
11 comprehensive bioterrorism plan and to improve and expand disease  
12 surveillance and investigation, communication, public health laboratory  
13 capacity, and hospital system readiness.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW  
15 to read as follows:

16 (1) The department shall be designated as the coordinator of the  
17 state bioterrorism preparedness and response program. By July 2, 2002,  
18 the department shall prepare a plan for improving current preparedness  
19 and response for a bioterrorist event or other public health emergency.  
20 The plan shall address:

21 (a) Improvements to the communicable disease surveillance and  
22 investigation system, in a manner consistent with existing systems  
23 established under chapter 70.05 RCW and the rules of the state board of  
24 health;

25 (b) Additional methods of communication, including but not limited  
26 to an internet-based bioterrorism communications system for licensed  
27 health care professionals, to allow communication with and among local,  
28 state, and federal agencies, health care professionals, hospitals, and  
29 the public during a public health emergency; and

30 (c) Other measures necessary to detect and respond to a public  
31 health emergency, including but not limited to guidelines for the safe  
32 and effective management of persons isolated, quarantined, vaccinated,  
33 or treated during a public health emergency.

34 (2) The department shall also compare state statutes and  
35 regulations with federal requirements to determine whether additional  
36 statutory changes are necessary to address the unique needs of  
37 Washington state.

1 (3) Integration, coordination, and cross-agency collaboration are  
2 essential to the development of the plan. In developing and  
3 implementing the plan, the department shall coordinate with and involve  
4 representatives of the emergency management council, local health  
5 jurisdictions, other federal, state, and local agencies, health care  
6 providers, and hospitals.

7 (4) The plan developed according to this act must be consistent  
8 with the state comprehensive management plan under chapter 38.52 RCW.

9 (5) The department shall submit the state plan to the federal  
10 department of health and human services by March 15, 2002, and no later  
11 than April 15, 2002. If the deadline for plan submission is extended,  
12 the department shall submit the state plan no later than the subsequent  
13 deadline established by the federal department of health and human  
14 services.

15 (6) The department shall submit a written report on the comparison  
16 required by subsection (2) of this section and its progress in meeting  
17 the requirements of this section to the legislature no later than  
18 December 1, 2002.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
20 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
21 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
22 immediately.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires June 30, 2003.

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