
Health Care Committee

HB 1825

Brief Description: Requiring newborn hearing screening.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Schual-Berke, Fromhold, O'Brien, Lantz, Conway, Kenney, Linville, Moeller, Santos and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- All newborns must receive a hearing screening prior to discharge from the hospital and the results must be reported to the Department of Health.

Hearing Date: 2/27/03

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

It is estimated that between 80 and 239 children are born in Washington every year with significant hearing loss. A statewide needs assessment conducted by the Department of Health showed that approximately 76 percent of children in Washington with congenital hearing loss are not identified until they are at least two years old. Delays in recognizing a hearing impairment frequently lead to reduced language and learning skills.

Ten of Washington 72 birthing hospitals are reported to have universal hearing loss screening programs. The Department of Health is currently working to develop an early hearing loss detection, diagnosis, and intervention program through a pilot project with five hospitals and funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 30 other states require that all newborns be screened for hearing loss.

Summary of Bill:

All newborn infants must be provided with a hearing screening prior to discharge from the hospital, unless the child's parent or guardian objects on religious grounds. The practitioner who performs the screening examination must report the results to the Department of Health.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.