

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6189

As Passed House:
February 28, 2006

Title: An act relating to requiring hospitals to provide information to help patients better understand their hospital bills.

Brief Description: Requiring hospitals to provide patients certain billing information.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senator Keiser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/21/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/06, 96-1.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires a hospital to furnish patients with a list of those professionals that commonly provide care at the hospital and from whom the patient may get a bill, along with appropriate contact information.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Bailey, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Hospitals in Washington are subject to regulation by the State Department of Health, although the regulations do not address pricing policies or procedures. There is concern that hospital billing procedures are not patient friendly and that receiving multiple bills for a single hospital stay, often filled with procedure codes and other specialized terminology, leaves many who receive treatment frustrated and confused about the services they received, and to whom any charges are to be paid.

Summary of Bill:

Expresses the intent of the Legislature to encourage hospitals to design and implement health information technologies to provide patients with understandable billing information.

Requires a hospital to furnish patients with a list of those professionals that commonly provide care at the hospital and from whom the patient may get a bill, along with appropriate contact information. Hospitals owned or operated by a health maintenance organization are exempt.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Patients need better, more understandable information about their hospital bills.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.