

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6298

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As of January 29, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to creating the breastfeeding-friendly Washington designation.

**Brief Description:** Creating the breastfeeding-friendly Washington designation for hospitals.

**Sponsors:** Senators Becker, Holmquist Newbry, Brown, Rivers, Keiser and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 1/27/14.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Staff:** Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

**Background:** The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program to encourage and recognize hospitals and birthing centers that promote breastfeeding for infant feeding and mother and baby bonding. Studies show that breastfed babies are less likely to suffer from serious illnesses, including gastroenteritis, asthma, eczema, and respiratory and ear infections. Adults who were breastfed as babies may be less likely to develop risk factors for heart disease such as obesity and high blood pressure. Women who breastfeed are less likely to develop heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and hip fractures in later life.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** The Department of Health (DOH) must create the Breastfeeding-Friendly Washington designation for hospitals and birthing centers that support and encourage breastfeeding. To participate in this voluntary program, hospitals and birthing centers must submit their breastfeeding policies and supporting documentation with an application to DOH. DOH then reviews and approves policies that meet designation requirements and issues a designation based on the number of steps met by the hospital.

Beginning July 1, 2014, approved hospitals and birthing centers may use the designation on promotional materials if they achieve criteria defined by DOH based on the following ten steps:

- have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff;

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- train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy;
- inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding;
- help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth;
- show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants;
- encourage breast milk over alternatives, but may provide guidance on formula supplementation or bottle feeding, if preferred by the mother or medically indicated;
- practice rooming in by allowing mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours per day;
- encourage breastfeeding on demand;
- give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants; or
- foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

DOH may issue two types of Breastfeeding-Friendly Washington designations: (1) a designation recognizing a facility meeting the criteria for five or more steps; and (2) a designation recognizing a facility meeting all the criteria for all ten steps.

By December 31, 2016, DOH must report to the Legislature on the levels of achievement by, and locations of, participating hospitals and birthing centers and with recommendations to improve or expand the program.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE (Proposed Substitute):**

- Changes one of the ten steps from “Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated,” to “Encourage breast milk over alternatives, but may provide guidance on formula supplementation or bottle feeding, if preferred by the mother or medically indicated.”
- The first of two Breastfeeding-Friendly Washington designations may be given to hospitals and birthing facilities that have met five or more steps.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 22, 2014.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute as Heard in Committee:**

PRO: This bill does not mandate breastfeeding, but recognizes hospitals that encourage breastfeeding. Research and data shows women who receive support in the hospital are more successful in breastfeeding at home. Breastfeeding offers health benefits to both mother and baby and promotes mother-baby bonding. Breast milk has special nutrients not available in formula. Washington hospitals support the bill as part of collaborative efforts to ensure hospitals provide the best care for moms and babies. Twenty-seven percent of Washington's population is now termed obese and this bill is a part of obesity prevention efforts.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Becker, prime sponsor; Lisa Thatcher, WA State Hospital Assn.; Alison Carl White, WithinReach; Vic Coleman, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition; Jennifer McNamara, DOH.