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**HOUSE BILL 2716**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Fitzgibbon, Walsh, Ormsby, Bergquist, Stokesbary, Volz, and Tharinger; by request of Department of Retirement Systems

AN ACT Relating to protecting the confidentiality of retirement system files and records relating to health information; amending RCW 42.56.360; and adding a new section to chapter 41.04 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 41.04 RCW to read as follows:

Medical information contained in files and records of members of retirement plans administered by the department of retirement systems, under the provisions of this title, are confidential and exempt from public inspection and copying under chapter 42.56 RCW. However:

(1) Representatives of an applicant may review an application file or receive specific information from an application file with the signed authorization of the applicant.

(2) Health care providers treating or examining applicants claiming disability retirement benefits under this title, or physicians giving medical advice to the department of retirement systems regarding any application, may, at the discretion of the department of retirement systems, inspect the application files and records of applicants.

(3) At the discretion of the department of retirement systems, persons rendering assistance to the department at any stage of the proceedings on any matter pertaining to the administration of this title may inspect the health information contained in application files and records of applicants.

**Sec.**  RCW 42.56.360 and 2016 c 238 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The following health care information is exempt from disclosure under this chapter:

(a) Information obtained by the pharmacy quality assurance commission as provided in RCW 69.45.090;

(b) Information obtained by the pharmacy quality assurance commission or the department of health and its representatives as provided in RCW 69.41.044, 69.41.280, and 18.64.420;

(c) Information and documents created specifically for, and collected and maintained by a quality improvement committee under RCW 43.70.510, 70.230.080, or 70.41.200, or by a peer review committee under RCW 4.24.250, or by a quality assurance committee pursuant to RCW 74.42.640 or 18.20.390, or by a hospital, as defined in RCW 43.70.056, for reporting of health care-associated infections under RCW 43.70.056, a notification of an incident under RCW 70.56.040(5), and reports regarding adverse events under RCW 70.56.020(2)(b), regardless of which agency is in possession of the information and documents;

(d)(i) Proprietary financial and commercial information that the submitting entity, with review by the department of health, specifically identifies at the time it is submitted and that is provided to or obtained by the department of health in connection with an application for, or the supervision of, an antitrust exemption sought by the submitting entity under RCW 43.72.310;

(ii) If a request for such information is received, the submitting entity must be notified of the request. Within ten business days of receipt of the notice, the submitting entity shall provide a written statement of the continuing need for confidentiality, which shall be provided to the requester. Upon receipt of such notice, the department of health shall continue to treat information designated under this subsection (1)(d) as exempt from disclosure;

(iii) If the requester initiates an action to compel disclosure under this chapter, the submitting entity must be joined as a party to demonstrate the continuing need for confidentiality;

(e) Records of the entity obtained in an action under RCW 18.71.300 through 18.71.340;

(f) Complaints filed under chapter 18.130 RCW after July 27, 1997, to the extent provided in RCW 18.130.095(1);

(g) Information obtained by the department of health under chapter 70.225 RCW;

(h) Information collected by the department of health under chapter 70.245 RCW except as provided in RCW 70.245.150;

(i) Cardiac and stroke system performance data submitted to national, state, or local data collection systems under RCW 70.168.150(2)(b);

(j) All documents, including completed forms, received pursuant to a wellness program under RCW 41.04.362, but not statistical reports that do not identify an individual; ((~~and~~))

(k) Data and information exempt from disclosure under RCW 43.371.040; and

(l) Medical information contained in files and records of members of retirement plans administered by the department of retirement systems, as provided to the department of retirement systems under section 1 of this act.

(2) Chapter 70.02 RCW applies to public inspection and copying of health care information of patients.

(3)(a) Documents related to infant mortality reviews conducted pursuant to RCW 70.05.170 are exempt from disclosure as provided for in RCW 70.05.170(3).

(b)(i) If an agency provides copies of public records to another agency that are exempt from public disclosure under this subsection (3), those records remain exempt to the same extent the records were exempt in the possession of the originating entity.

(ii) For notice purposes only, agencies providing exempt records under this subsection (3) to other agencies may mark any exempt records as "exempt" so that the receiving agency is aware of the exemption, however whether or not a record is marked exempt does not affect whether the record is actually exempt from disclosure.

(4) Information and documents related to maternal mortality reviews conducted pursuant to RCW 70.54.450 are confidential and exempt from public inspection and copying.

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