

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1686

---

As of March 22, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to hospital access to care policies.

**Brief Description:** Concerning hospital access to care policies.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Macri, Cody, Robinson, Riccelli, Slatter, Jinkins and Pollet).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/08/19, 67-31.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long Term Care: 3/22/19.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires hospitals to submit policies related to access to care to the Department of Health (DOH).
- Requires DOH to create a form to be used to submit policies that provides consumers with information about which end-of-life and reproductive health care services are and are not provided at each hospital.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

**Staff:** LeighBeth Merrick (786-7445)

**Background:** The Governor's Directive 13-12, directed DOH to adopt rules improving transparency for consumer information, by requiring hospitals supply non-discrimination, end-of-life care, and reproductive health care policies, which consumers must have access to on DOH's webpage. DOH's rules require every hospital to submit to DOH its policies related to access to care regarding:

- admission;
- nondiscrimination;
- end-of-life care; and
- reproductive health care.

These policies must be posted on a hospital's and DOH's websites. If a hospital makes changes or additions to any of the policies, it must submit a copy of the new policy to DOH within 30 days after the hospital approves the changes or additions.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:** By September 1, 2019, every hospital must submit to DOH its policies related to access to care regarding:

- admission;
- nondiscrimination;
- end-of-life care; and
- reproductive health care.

If a hospital makes any changes to the policies, it must submit an updated copy to DOH within 30 days of the change.

By September 1, 2019, DOH in consultation with a hospital association and patient advocacy groups must develop a simple and clear form to be used by hospitals to submit the access to care policies. The form must provide the public with specific information about what end-of-life care and reproductive health care services are and are not available at each hospital. The form must include contact information for the hospital in case patients have specific questions about services available at the hospital.

Each hospital must post their policies on their website and DOH must post each hospital's policies on their website.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Even though hospitals are currently required to submit their access to care policies so DOH can post on its website, there is not a clear and consistent way that hospitals are providing this information. The disclosures that hospitals provide vary widely which makes it very helpful to the public when they are facing a medical issue and are trying to understand what services a hospital is providing and what services a hospital is not providing. Patients should be able to easily find out what health care services are and are not available at hospitals. The current rule does not specify the level of information or the format that hospitals need to provide this information. This bill would create a standardized form that hospitals would have to use when providing their access to care policies to DOH so there is clear and consistent information provided by all hospitals and accessible to the public.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Nicole Macri, Prime Sponsor; Nancy Sapiro, End of Life Washington; Chris Bandoli, Washington State Hospital Association; Eric Gonzalez Alfaro, American Civil Liberties Union of Washington; Hilary Schwandt, citizen.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.