

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5906

As of January 29, 2024

Title: An act relating to implementing a statewide drug overdose prevention and education campaign.

Brief Description: Implementing a statewide drug overdose prevention and education campaign.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, L., Dozier, Gildon, Holy, Mullet, Torres, Warnick and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 1/16/24 [w/oRec-WM].
Ways & Means: 1/29/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health to develop and maintain an ongoing drug overdose prevention campaign.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Monica Fontaine (786-7341)

Background: Department of Health. The Department of Health (DOH) provides services to promote and protect public health in Washington. The DOH works with local health jurisdictions, tribal partners, and state healthcare systems to provide technical assistance and strategic planning related to public health.

Opioid Epidemic. The opioid epidemic began in the 1990s and over 640,000 people nationwide have died as the result of opioid overdose. In 2022 there were 2703 drug-related deaths in the Washington with 2000 of those deaths related to opioid overdose. Over 5000 people were hospitalized for non-fatal drug overdose.

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

Opioid Epidemic Campaigns. The Health Care Authority (HCA) and DOH both produce campaigns related to drug use, including methamphetamines and fentanyl.

Ongoing funding has been appropriated to DOH and HCA three times:

- \$400,000 per fiscal year for opioid use prevention on Spanish-language radio in the Yakima valley to DOH;
- \$60,000 per fiscal year for a fentanyl campaign for youth to DOH;
- \$1 million per fiscal year for an opioid awareness campaign to educate youth and young adults of the prevalence and dangers associated with fentanyl in the illicit street drug supply to HCA.

Summary of Bill: DOH must develop, implement, and maintain an ongoing drug overdose prevention campaign, including information on dangers and harms related to drug use. DOH may include additional information on addiction and overdose prevention, resources for treatment, and immunity for those seeking medical assistance. DOH must provide outreach to youth and adults.

DOH must submit an annual report beginning June 30, 2025. The report must include information on the content included in the campaign, how the campaign was distributed, and data on how many individuals the campaign reached.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2024.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Investing in drug overdose and prevention will save the state from continuing to invest in treatment, recovery, and the criminal justice system. There should be money in these areas, but the emphasis has been on how to administer Narcan. That is death prevention. We need resources upstream with education and knowledge to reduce the financial and life impact of drug overdose. Help people not use or get help when they need it.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lynda Wilson, Prime Sponsor; LINDA THOMPSON, Washington Association for Substance misuse and Violence Prevention (WASAVP).

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