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**SENATE BILL 5920**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Padden, Fortunato, Keiser, Warnick, and L. Wilson

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1 AN ACT Relating to lifting certificate of need requirements for  
2 the construction of psychiatric hospitals and the addition of  
3 psychiatric beds; amending RCW 70.38.111; and repealing RCW 70.38.260  
4 and 70.38.270.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 70.38.111 and 2021 c 277 s 1 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (1) The department shall not require a certificate of need for  
9 the offering of an inpatient tertiary health service by:

10 (a) A health maintenance organization or a combination of health  
11 maintenance organizations if (i) the organization or combination of  
12 organizations has, in the service area of the organization or the  
13 service areas of the organizations in the combination, an enrollment  
14 of at least fifty thousand individuals, (ii) the facility in which  
15 the service will be provided is or will be geographically located so  
16 that the service will be reasonably accessible to such enrolled  
17 individuals, and (iii) at least seventy-five percent of the patients  
18 who can reasonably be expected to receive the tertiary health service  
19 will be individuals enrolled with such organization or organizations  
20 in the combination;

1 (b) A health care facility if (i) the facility primarily provides  
2 or will provide inpatient health services, (ii) the facility is or  
3 will be controlled, directly or indirectly, by a health maintenance  
4 organization or a combination of health maintenance organizations  
5 which has, in the service area of the organization or service areas  
6 of the organizations in the combination, an enrollment of at least  
7 fifty thousand individuals, (iii) the facility is or will be  
8 geographically located so that the service will be reasonably  
9 accessible to such enrolled individuals, and (iv) at least seventy-  
10 five percent of the patients who can reasonably be expected to  
11 receive the tertiary health service will be individuals enrolled with  
12 such organization or organizations in the combination; or

13 (c) A health care facility (or portion thereof) if (i) the  
14 facility is or will be leased by a health maintenance organization or  
15 combination of health maintenance organizations which has, in the  
16 service area of the organization or the service areas of the  
17 organizations in the combination, an enrollment of at least fifty  
18 thousand individuals and, on the date the application is submitted  
19 under subsection (2) of this section, at least fifteen years remain  
20 in the term of the lease, (ii) the facility is or will be  
21 geographically located so that the service will be reasonably  
22 accessible to such enrolled individuals, and (iii) at least seventy-  
23 five percent of the patients who can reasonably be expected to  
24 receive the tertiary health service will be individuals enrolled with  
25 such organization;

26 if, with respect to such offering or obligation by a nursing home,  
27 the department has, upon application under subsection (2) of this  
28 section, granted an exemption from such requirement to the  
29 organization, combination of organizations, or facility.

30 (2) A health maintenance organization, combination of health  
31 maintenance organizations, or health care facility shall not be  
32 exempt under subsection (1) of this section from obtaining a  
33 certificate of need before offering a tertiary health service unless:

34 (a) It has submitted at least thirty days prior to the offering  
35 of services reviewable under RCW 70.38.105(4)(d) an application for  
36 such exemption; and

37 (b) The application contains such information respecting the  
38 organization, combination, or facility and the proposed offering or  
39 obligation by a nursing home as the department may require to  
40 determine if the organization or combination meets the requirements

1 of subsection (1) of this section or the facility meets or will meet  
2 such requirements; and

3 (c) The department approves such application. The department  
4 shall approve or disapprove an application for exemption within  
5 thirty days of receipt of a completed application. In the case of a  
6 proposed health care facility (or portion thereof) which has not  
7 begun to provide tertiary health services on the date an application  
8 is submitted under this subsection with respect to such facility (or  
9 portion), the facility (or portion) shall meet the applicable  
10 requirements of subsection (1) of this section when the facility  
11 first provides such services. The department shall approve an  
12 application submitted under this subsection if it determines that the  
13 applicable requirements of subsection (1) of this section are met.

14 (3) A health care facility (or any part thereof) with respect to  
15 which an exemption was granted under subsection (1) of this section  
16 may not be sold or leased and a controlling interest in such facility  
17 or in a lease of such facility may not be acquired and a health care  
18 facility described in subsection (1)(c) of this section which was  
19 granted an exemption under subsection (1) of this section may not be  
20 used by any person other than the lessee described in subsection  
21 (1)(c) of this section unless:

22 (a) The department issues a certificate of need approving the  
23 sale, lease, acquisition, or use; or

24 (b) The department determines, upon application, that (i) the  
25 entity to which the facility is proposed to be sold or leased, which  
26 intends to acquire the controlling interest, or which intends to use  
27 the facility is a health maintenance organization or a combination of  
28 health maintenance organizations which meets the requirements of  
29 subsection (1)(a)(i) of this section, and (ii) with respect to such  
30 facility, meets the requirements of subsection (1)(a)(ii) or (iii) of  
31 this section or the requirements of subsection (1)(b)(i) and (ii) of  
32 this section.

33 (4) In the case of a health maintenance organization, an  
34 ambulatory care facility, or a health care facility, which ambulatory  
35 or health care facility is controlled, directly or indirectly, by a  
36 health maintenance organization or a combination of health  
37 maintenance organizations, the department may under the program apply  
38 its certificate of need requirements to the offering of inpatient  
39 tertiary health services to the extent that such offering is not  
40 exempt under the provisions of this section or RCW 70.38.105(7).

1 (5) (a) The department shall not require a certificate of need for  
2 the construction, development, or other establishment of a nursing  
3 home, or the addition of beds to an existing nursing home, that is  
4 owned and operated by a continuing care retirement community that:

5 (i) Offers services only to contractual members;

6 (ii) Provides its members a contractually guaranteed range of  
7 services from independent living through skilled nursing, including  
8 some assistance with daily living activities;

9 (iii) Contractually assumes responsibility for the cost of  
10 services exceeding the member's financial responsibility under the  
11 contract, so that no third party, with the exception of insurance  
12 purchased by the retirement community or its members, but including  
13 the medicaid program, is liable for costs of care even if the member  
14 depletes his or her personal resources;

15 (iv) Has offered continuing care contracts and operated a nursing  
16 home continuously since January 1, 1988, or has obtained a  
17 certificate of need to establish a nursing home;

18 (v) Maintains a binding agreement with the state assuring that  
19 financial liability for services to members, including nursing home  
20 services, will not fall upon the state;

21 (vi) Does not operate, and has not undertaken a project that  
22 would result in a number of nursing home beds in excess of one for  
23 every four living units operated by the continuing care retirement  
24 community, exclusive of nursing home beds; and

25 (vii) Has obtained a professional review of pricing and long-term  
26 solvency within the prior five years which was fully disclosed to  
27 members.

28 (b) A continuing care retirement community shall not be exempt  
29 under this subsection from obtaining a certificate of need unless:

30 (i) It has submitted an application for exemption at least thirty  
31 days prior to commencing construction of, is submitting an  
32 application for the licensure of, or is commencing operation of a  
33 nursing home, whichever comes first; and

34 (ii) The application documents to the department that the  
35 continuing care retirement community qualifies for exemption.

36 (c) The sale, lease, acquisition, or use of part or all of a  
37 continuing care retirement community nursing home that qualifies for  
38 exemption under this subsection shall require prior certificate of  
39 need approval to qualify for licensure as a nursing home unless the  
40 department determines such sale, lease, acquisition, or use is by a

1 continuing care retirement community that meets the conditions of (a)  
2 of this subsection.

3 (6) A rural hospital, as defined by the department, reducing the  
4 number of licensed beds to become a rural primary care hospital under  
5 the provisions of Part A Title XVIII of the Social Security Act  
6 Section 1820, 42 U.S.C., 1395c et seq. may, within three years of the  
7 reduction of beds licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW, increase the  
8 number of licensed beds to no more than the previously licensed  
9 number without being subject to the provisions of this chapter.

10 (7) A rural health care facility licensed under RCW 70.175.100  
11 formerly licensed as a hospital under chapter 70.41 RCW may, within  
12 three years of the effective date of the rural health care facility  
13 license, apply to the department for a hospital license and not be  
14 subject to the requirements of RCW 70.38.105(4)(a) as the  
15 construction, development, or other establishment of a new hospital,  
16 provided there is no increase in the number of beds previously  
17 licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW and there is no redistribution in  
18 the number of beds used for acute care or long-term care, the rural  
19 health care facility has been in continuous operation, and the rural  
20 health care facility has not been purchased or leased.

21 (8) A rural hospital determined to no longer meet critical access  
22 hospital status for state law purposes as a result of participation  
23 in the Washington rural health access preservation pilot identified  
24 by the state office of rural health and formerly licensed as a  
25 hospital under chapter 70.41 RCW may apply to the department to renew  
26 its hospital license and not be subject to the requirements of RCW  
27 70.38.105(4)(a) as the construction, development, or other  
28 establishment of a new hospital, provided there is no increase in the  
29 number of beds previously licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW. If all or  
30 part of a formerly licensed rural hospital is sold, purchased, or  
31 leased during the period the rural hospital does not meet critical  
32 access hospital status as a result of participation in the Washington  
33 rural health access preservation pilot and the new owner or lessor  
34 applies to renew the rural hospital's license, then the sale,  
35 purchase, or lease of part or all of the rural hospital is subject to  
36 the provisions of this chapter.

37 (9) (a) A nursing home that voluntarily reduces the number of its  
38 licensed beds to provide assisted living, licensed assisted living  
39 facility care, adult day care, adult day health, respite care,  
40 hospice, outpatient therapy services, congregate meals, home health,

1 or senior wellness clinic, or to reduce to one or two the number of  
2 beds per room or to otherwise enhance the quality of life for  
3 residents in the nursing home, may convert the original facility or  
4 portion of the facility back, and thereby increase the number of  
5 nursing home beds to no more than the previously licensed number of  
6 nursing home beds without obtaining a certificate of need under this  
7 chapter, provided the facility has been in continuous operation and  
8 has not been purchased or leased. Any conversion to the original  
9 licensed bed capacity, or to any portion thereof, shall comply with  
10 the same life and safety code requirements as existed at the time the  
11 nursing home voluntarily reduced its licensed beds; unless waivers  
12 from such requirements were issued, in which case the converted beds  
13 shall reflect the conditions or standards that then existed pursuant  
14 to the approved waivers.

15 (b) To convert beds back to nursing home beds under this  
16 subsection, the nursing home must:

17 (i) Give notice of its intent to preserve conversion options to  
18 the department of health no later than thirty days after the  
19 effective date of the license reduction; and

20 (ii) Give notice to the department of health and to the  
21 department of social and health services of the intent to convert  
22 beds back. If construction is required for the conversion of beds  
23 back, the notice of intent to convert beds back must be given, at a  
24 minimum, one year prior to the effective date of license modification  
25 reflecting the restored beds; otherwise, the notice must be given a  
26 minimum of ninety days prior to the effective date of license  
27 modification reflecting the restored beds. Prior to any license  
28 modification to convert beds back to nursing home beds under this  
29 section, the licensee must demonstrate that the nursing home meets  
30 the certificate of need exemption requirements of this section.

31 The term "construction," as used in (b)(ii) of this subsection,  
32 is limited to those projects that are expected to equal or exceed the  
33 expenditure minimum amount, as determined under this chapter.

34 (c) Conversion of beds back under this subsection must be  
35 completed no later than four years after the effective date of the  
36 license reduction. However, for good cause shown, the four-year  
37 period for conversion may be extended by the department of health for  
38 one additional four-year period.

39 (d) Nursing home beds that have been voluntarily reduced under  
40 this section shall be counted as available nursing home beds for the

1 purpose of evaluating need under RCW 70.38.115(2) (a) and (k) so long  
2 as the facility retains the ability to convert them back to nursing  
3 home use under the terms of this section.

4 (e) When a building owner has secured an interest in the nursing  
5 home beds, which are intended to be voluntarily reduced by the  
6 licensee under (a) of this subsection, the applicant shall provide  
7 the department with a written statement indicating the building  
8 owner's approval of the bed reduction.

9 (10)(a) The department shall not require a certificate of need  
10 for a hospice agency if:

11 (i) The hospice agency is designed to serve the unique religious  
12 or cultural needs of a religious group or an ethnic minority and  
13 commits to furnishing hospice services in a manner specifically aimed  
14 at meeting the unique religious or cultural needs of the religious  
15 group or ethnic minority;

16 (ii) The hospice agency is operated by an organization that:

17 (A) Operates a facility, or group of facilities, that offers a  
18 comprehensive continuum of long-term care services, including, at a  
19 minimum, a licensed, medicare-certified nursing home, assisted  
20 living, independent living, day health, and various community-based  
21 support services, designed to meet the unique social, cultural, and  
22 religious needs of a specific cultural and ethnic minority group;

23 (B) Has operated the facility or group of facilities for at least  
24 ten continuous years prior to the establishment of the hospice  
25 agency;

26 (iii) The hospice agency commits to coordinating with existing  
27 hospice programs in its community when appropriate;

28 (iv) The hospice agency has a census of no more than forty  
29 patients;

30 (v) The hospice agency commits to obtaining and maintaining  
31 medicare certification;

32 (vi) The hospice agency only serves patients located in the same  
33 county as the majority of the long-term care services offered by the  
34 organization that operates the agency; and

35 (vii) The hospice agency is not sold or transferred to another  
36 agency.

37 (b) The department shall include the patient census for an agency  
38 exempted under this subsection (10) in its calculations for future  
39 certificate of need applications.

1           (11) ~~((To alleviate the need to board psychiatric patients in~~  
2 ~~emergency departments and increase capacity of hospitals to serve~~  
3 ~~individuals on ninety-day or one hundred eighty-day commitment~~  
4 ~~orders, for the period of time from May 5, 2017, through June 30,~~  
5 ~~2023:))~~

6           (a) The department ~~((shall suspend the))~~ may not require a  
7 certificate of need ((requirement)) for a hospital licensed under  
8 chapter 70.41 RCW that changes the use of licensed beds to increase  
9 the number of beds to provide psychiatric services ~~((, including~~  
10 ~~involuntary treatment services. A certificate of need exemption under~~  
11 ~~this subsection (11)(a) shall be valid for two years))~~.

12           (b) The department may not require a certificate of need for:

13           (i) The addition of new psychiatric beds ((as described in RCW  
14 ~~70.38.260 (2) and (3))~~) for a hospital licensed under chapter 70.41  
15 RCW; or

16           (ii) The construction, development, or establishment of a  
17 psychiatric hospital licensed as an establishment under chapter 71.12  
18 RCW ~~((that will have no more than sixteen beds and provide treatment~~  
19 ~~to adults on ninety or one hundred eighty-day involuntary commitment~~  
20 ~~orders, as described in RCW 70.38.260(4))~~.

21           (12)(a) An ambulatory surgical facility is exempt from all  
22 certificate of need requirements if the facility:

23           (i) Is an individual or group practice and, if the facility is a  
24 group practice, the privilege of using the facility is not extended  
25 to physicians outside the group practice;

26           (ii) Operated or received approval to operate, prior to January  
27 19, 2018; and

28           (iii) Was exempt from certificate of need requirements prior to  
29 January 19, 2018, because the facility either:

30           (A) Was determined to be exempt from certificate of need  
31 requirements pursuant to a determination of reviewability issued by  
32 the department; or

33           (B) Was a single-specialty endoscopy center in existence prior to  
34 January 14, 2003, when the department determined that endoscopy  
35 procedures were surgeries for purposes of certificate of need.

36           (b) The exemption under this subsection:

37           (i) Applies regardless of future changes of ownership, corporate  
38 structure, or affiliations of the individual or group practice as  
39 long as the use of the facility remains limited to physicians in the  
40 group practice; and



1 (ii) Does not apply to changes in services, specialties, or  
2 number of operating rooms.

3 (13) A rural health clinic providing health services in a home  
4 health shortage area as declared by the department pursuant to 42  
5 C.F.R. Sec. 405.2416 is not subject to certificate of need review  
6 under this chapter.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The following acts or parts of acts are  
8 each repealed:

9 (1) RCW 70.38.260 (Certain hospitals not subject to certificate  
10 of need requirements for the addition of the number of new  
11 psychiatric beds) and 2021 c 277 s 2, 2019 c 324 s 9, 2017 c 199 s 2,  
12 & 2015 3rd sp.s. c 22 s 2; and

13 (2) RCW 70.38.270 (Psychiatric beds added under RCW 70.38.260)  
14 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 22 s 3.

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