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State of Washington

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1993 Regular Session

By Representatives Flemming, Leonard, Karahalios, Kessler, Eide, J. Kohl, Riley, Dunshee, G. Cole, Veloria, Roland, Patterson, Wolfe, Wang, Johanson, H. Myers, Carlson, Dyer, L. Johnson, Jones, Quall, Rayburn, Springer, Holm and Ogden

Read first time 02/19/93. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to the home health visitor program; adding a new
2 section to chapter 43.70 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring an
3 emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The incidence of child abuse and neglect has
6 reached epidemic proportions in the nation. In Washington state alone,
7 there were sixty-two thousand five hundred reports of child abuse and
8 neglect in 1991. That is one occurrence for every twenty-one children
9 in this state. Research shows that most reported cases of physical
10 abuse and neglect occurs among children under the age of five.
11 Research also shows that child abuse and neglect can be prevented. One
12 of the most effective strategies for preventing child abuse and neglect
13 is to provide parents who are most at risk of abuse, with education and
14 supportive services beginning at the time their infant is born and
15 continuing in the home. Therefore, it is the legislature's intent to
16 develop the home health visitor program in this state.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW
18 to read as follows:

1 The department of health, the department of social and health
2 services, the department of community development, the superintendent
3 of public instruction, and the employment security department shall,
4 collectively and collaboratively, develop a plan for a home health
5 visitor program that shall have as its primary purpose the prevention
6 of child abuse and neglect through the provision of selected
7 educational and supportive services to high risk parents of newborns.

8 (1) The program shall: (a) Be community-based; (b) include early
9 hospital-based screening to identify high risk parents of newborns; (c)
10 provide for an effective, in-home outreach and support program for high
11 risk parents of newborns that involves: (i) Frequent home visits, (ii)
12 parent training on early childhood development, parenting, and the
13 stress factors that lead to abuse and neglect, and (iii) referrals to
14 needed social and health services; and (d) demonstrate effective
15 coordination among current community-based programs that may also serve
16 high risk parents and their infants, including child abuse prevention
17 programs, first steps, second steps, the early childhood education and
18 assistance program, the healthy kids program, child welfare services,
19 the women, infants, and child program, the high priority infant
20 tracking program, the birth to six program, local and state public
21 health prevention and early intervention services, and other services
22 as identified.

23 (2) The plan shall: (a) Include an estimate and a description of
24 the high risk groups to be served; (b) detail the screening process and
25 mechanisms to be used to identify high risk parents; (c) detail the
26 services to be included in the in-home program; (d) describe staffing
27 that may include the use of teams of professionals, paraprofessionals,
28 and volunteers; (e) describe how the program will be evaluated,
29 including the measurable outcomes to be achieved; and (f) provide an
30 estimate of the costs to fully implement the program state-wide, and
31 for possible consideration, a series of pilot projects with a phased-in
32 schedule.

33 (3) The plan shall be provided to the appropriate legislative
34 committees by December 1, 1993.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
36 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the

1 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take
2 effect immediately.

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