

1 **SHB 1046 - H AMD FAILED 2/10/95 061**

2 By Representatives Patterson, Brown and Kessler

3 On page 7, line 17, strike "(27) RCW 43.72.240 and 1993 c 494
4 s 4 & 1993 c 492 s 466;"

5
EFFECT: Deletes Small firm financial assistance repealer. If adopted, the effect would be to maintain in law all of the Washington Health Services Act, except for Small firm financial assistance.

RCW 43.72.240 Small firm financial assistance. (1) Beginning July 1, 1997, firms with fewer than twenty-five workers that face barriers to providing health insurance for their employees may, upon application, be eligible to receive financial assistance with funds set aside from the health services account. Firms with the following characteristics shall be given preference in the distribution of funds: (a) New firms, (b) employers with low average wages, (c) employers with low profits, and (d) firms in economically distressed areas.

(2) All employers in existence on or before July 1, 1997, who meet the criteria set forth in this section, and rules adopted under this section, may apply to the health services commission for assistance. Such employers may not receive premium assistance beyond July 1, 2001. New employers, who come into existence after July 1, 1997, may apply for and receive premium assistance for a limited period of time, as determined by the commission.

(3) The total funds available for small business assistance shall be the lesser of (a) one hundred fifty million dollars or (b) twenty-five percent of the cost of the uniform benefits package per the eligible applicants' insured employee or dependents as the case may be, for the biennium beginning July 1, 1997. Thereafter, the amount of total funds available for premium assistance shall be determined by the office of financial management, based on a forecast of inflation, employment, and the number of eligible firms.

(4) By July 1, 1997, the health services commission, with assistance from the small business advisory committee established in RCW 43.72.060, shall develop specific definitions, rules, and procedures governing all aspects of the small business assistance program, including application procedures, thresholds regarding firm size, wages, profits, and age of firm, and rules governing duration of assistance. The health services commission will endeavor to design a system for the distribution of assistance that will create minimal burdens on businesses seeking financial assistance.

(5) Final determination of the amount of the premium assistance to be dispensed to an employer shall be made by the commission based on rules, definitions, and procedures developed under this section. If total claims for assistance are above the amount of total funds available for such purposes, the commission shall have the authority to prorate employer claims so that the amount of available funds is not exceeded.

(6) The office of financial management, in consultation with the commission, shall establish appropriate criteria for monitoring and evaluating the economic and labor market impacts of the premium assistance program and report its findings to the commission annually through July 1, 2001. [1993 c 494 ú 4; 1993 c 492 ú 466.]