

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2279-S

May 13, 1997

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 3 and 4, Substitute House Bill No. 2279 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the basic health plan;"

I have vetoed sections 3 and 4 of SHB 2279 because they amend sections of ESHB 2018 that I have already vetoed. Section 3 makes reference to Section 203 of ESHB 2018 which would have limited the open enrollment period for health insurance to two months per year. This section represents a significant change to current policy and could require individuals to wait as long as 13 months for regular health insurance coverage.

Section 4 of SHB 2279 makes reference to section 204 of ESHB 2108 which would have allowed health carriers the option to discontinue or modify a particular plan with ninety days' notice to enrollees, with no requirement that comparable benefits be offered in another plan. Again, this a significant change to current law which requires that carriers may not discontinue a plan unless the carrier offers a comparable product as an alternative.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 3 and 4 of Substitute House Bill No. 2279.

With the exception of sections 3 and 4, I am approving Substitute House Bill No. 2279.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor