

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5114

As Passed Senate, March 4, 1999

Title: An act relating to an exemption from annual inspections for hospitals accredited by the American osteopathic association.

Brief Description: Exempting certain hospitals from annual inspections.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Thibaudeau and Deccio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/25/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/4/99, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin, Johnson, Winsley.

Staff: Christopher Blake (786-7446)

Background: Hospitals in Washington State must obtain a license from the Department of Health prior to operating as a hospital. In order to maintain their licenses, hospitals are required to undergo an annual inspection of the premises and operations by the department. There is, however, an exemption from the inspection for hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations.

The Joint Commission is a not-for-profit organization that offers accreditation to hospitals that meet its professional standards and performance measures. The exemption is available as long as the Joint Commission's standards are equivalent to the department's, the hospital has been inspected in the last year, and a copy of the survey report is sent to the department.

The American Osteopathic Association is a private organization that also operates an accreditation program for hospitals that meet its criteria. It has received approval from the federal government's Health Care Financing Administration to conduct accreditation surveys of acute care hospitals and hospital laboratories. The American Osteopathic Association would like to have its accredited hospitals in Washington State receive the same exemption from inspections that the Joint Commission's hospitals have.

Summary of Bill: Hospitals that are accredited by the American Osteopathic Association are exempt from the Department of Health's annual inspection requirement as long as: (1) the department determines that the association's standards are substantially equivalent to its own, (2) the association has examined the hospital within the past 12 months, and (3) the department receives a copy of the survey report prepared by the association that states that the hospital meets these standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is a cost-effective measure for hospitals accredited by the American Osteopathic Association and creates consistency within the regulatory reform process for hospital licensing rules.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Andy Davidson, WA State Hospital Assn.; Jeff Larson, WA Osteopathic Assn.