

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1275

As Passed House:

March 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to the human immunodeficiency virus insurance program.

Brief Description: Transferring the human immunodeficiency virus insurance program to the department of health.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Darneille, Pflug, Moeller, Cody, Romero, Wood and Upthegrove; by request of Department of Health).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/4/03, 2/13/03 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/03, 93-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Transfers the human immunodeficiency virus insurance program from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Department of Health.
- Authorizes insurance coverage through either group or individual health insurance policies.
- Limits policies in the Washington State Health Insurance Pool to the number supported on July 1, 2003.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Edwards, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services has operated the Acquired Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome Insurance Program since 1993. The program ensures health insurance coverage for persons with human immunodeficiency syndrome who meet department eligibility standards, and are eligible for "continuation coverage" under federal COBRA standards, or group insurance policies.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The statute authorizing the Department of Social and Health Services to operate the program which ensures health insurance coverage for persons with human immunodeficiency virus, who meet eligibility requirements and are eligible for "continuation coverage" under federal COBRA standards, is repealed. The Department of Health is authorized to ensure health insurance coverage for eligible persons either through group or individual health insurance policies. The program will be open to individuals who are not eligible for medical assistance programs from the Department of Social and Health Services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2003.

Testimony For: The Department of Health coordinates all the other programs and services for people living with HIV and AIDS. This will result in improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Testimony Against: If this insurance program is allowed to support an unlimited number of persons in the WSHIP program, it will represent an institutional cost shift from the state to private insurance companies.

Testified: (In support) Representative Darneille, prime sponsor; Dr. Maxine Hayes, Department of Health; and Ross Baker and Paul Feldman, Lifelong AIDS Alliance.

(Concerns) Mel Sorensen, Employer Health Care Coalition; Gary Smith, Independent Business Association; Nancee Wildermuth, Regence Blue Shield and Pacificare; and Amber Balch, Association of Washington Business.