

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2985

C 173 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for individual health insurance for retired and disabled public employees.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Campbell, Kenney, Dickerson and Rockefeller).

House Committee on Health Care
Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

Background:

In 2002 the Legislature enacted legislation requiring political subdivisions to offer retirees and disabled employees access to group health insurance coverage. The legislation took effect on January 1, 2003, but political subdivisions were allowed up to one year from this date to come into compliance. The legislation established a mandate for the political subdivision to offer access to health coverage, but did not require health carriers to offer such coverage. Following the passage of the legislation in 2002, health carriers have declined to offer group policies for public retirees and disabled employees, and political subdivisions have not been able to offer any alternatives to their retirees or disabled employees.

Summary:

If political subdivisions are unable to offer access to group health insurance for their retirees and disabled employees, they must assist their retirees and disabled employees in applying for individual health benefit plans. Assistance may include developing standardized information on the availability and cost of individual health benefit plans, application packages, and health benefit fairs. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner must make available health benefit plan information, including a list of carriers that offer individual coverage, rates and how to apply.

Members of the Washington Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System Plan 2 are included in the public employee retirees and disabled employees who must be assisted.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0

Senate 49 0

Effective: March 26, 2004