

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5833

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to coordinating and scheduling surveys and audits of hospitals and health care services and facilities operated or controlled by hospitals.

Brief Description: Coordinating and scheduling surveys and audits of hospitals and health care services and facilities operated or controlled by hospitals.

Sponsors: Senators Deccio, Franklin, Brandland, Keiser, Parlette, Winsley, Thibaudeau and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/25/03, 3/4/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5833 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: Various state agencies conduct surveys and audits on hospitals and their affiliated health care services and facilities. These agencies include the Department of Health, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the Department of Revenue.

There is concern that hospitals may be better able to respond to surveys and audits and implement suggested changes, if they are not subject to simultaneous or back-to-back surveys or audits.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Except for surveys or audits that are conducted in response to a complaint received by an agency, requested by a hospital, or required to be unannounced under state or federal law, agencies conducting surveys or audits of hospitals or their services or facilities must coordinate the scheduling of all surveys or audits with other agencies and share information and documents provided by hospitals, hospital services, and facilities pertaining to surveys and audits.. The Department of Health, with the participation of stakeholders and all other agencies conducting surveys or audits, must design a process to coordinate scheduling surveys and audits and to provide for agencies to share information and documents obtained from hospitals, hospital services, and facilities. The Department of Health must report back to the Legislature by October 1, 2003, describing the process for coordinating and identifying any legislative changes necessary to implement the process.

If an agency fails to comply with the process designed under this act, then a hospital, service, or facility may refuse to allow the agency to conduct the survey or audit at the time chosen by the agency and the agency must reschedule.

Each statute authorizing an agency or program to conduct surveys or audits is amended to require coordination of surveys and audits in accordance with the act.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds the requirement that the Department of Health work with other agencies to design a process to coordinate scheduling surveys and audits and to provide for agencies to share information and documents obtained from hospitals, hospital services, and facilities. The Department of Health must report back to the Legislature by October 1, 2003, describing the process for coordination and identifying any legislative changes necessary to implement the process. An emergency clause is added for the section requiring the Department of Health to design a process for coordination.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2003.

Effective Date: There is an emergency clause pertaining to Section 5 of the act, which takes effect immediately. The balance of the bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is about coordination, not limiting surveys or audits. There is also an exception for surveys that are required to be unannounced under state or federal law. A number of agencies conduct surveys and audits and request the same type of information.

Testimony Against: Advance notice of surveys or audits would hamper their effectiveness because hospitals would have time to get prepared. The technical aspects of this bill need to be worked out. There is concern about information sharing among different state agencies. Some audits may last two to three months, yet the beginning of one audit precludes another from starting. Thirty percent of Washington hospitals have boarding homes or nursing homes associated with them, to which this bill would apply.

Testified: Joanne Metropolis, SEIU-1199 NW (con); Sue Shoblom, DOH (pro w/concerns); Julie Sexton, Dept. of Revenue (concerns); Mary Corso, WA State Fire Marshall (concerns); Lisa Thatcher, WA State Hospital Assn. (pro); John White, Pend Oreille County Public Hospital District (pro); Debbie Miller, Providence St. Peter Hospital (pro).