

FINAL BILL REPORT

SCR 8419

As Passed Legislature

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee on health disparities.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Deccio, Thibaudeau, Keiser, T. Sheldon, McAuliffe and Kohl-Welles.

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

House Committee on Health Care

Background: In its final report on health disparities in 2001, the State Board of Health identified a disproportionate amount of disease and premature death in communities of color in the state. For several years, the board has made health disparities in communities of color one of its top public health priorities. Research has shown that increasing the number of people of color in the healthcare workforce, improving childhood intervention programs, and expanding the cultural competence of everyone who works in health care are three areas that could reduce health disparities in this state. There is interest in consolidating what is known about health disparities and providing the Legislature with recommendations.

Summary: A joint select committee on health disparities is created to identify opportunities for improving health care status and to address health disparities in communities of color. The committee includes four members of each chamber of the Legislature from committees with jurisdiction over health care and education issues. The committee must consider at least the following areas before it makes recommendations to the Legislature by November 2005: the impact of early childhood development programs, barriers to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care; ways to increase people of color in the health care workforce; the racial and ethnic composition of the health work force; and the impact of reductions in health care expenditures on communities of color, ways to increase choice of health care providers. The committee's tasks must also include how health care disparities affect women, including the impact of early childhood development programs on women's health, gender appropriate health care and health education materials; and ways to enumerate the composition of the health care workforce by gender.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	Adopted		(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)