

5949

Sponsor(s): Senators Deccio and Thibaudeau

Brief Description: Establishing emergency service requirements for hospitals.

**SB 5949.E - DIGEST**

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 3/19/03)

Requires a hospital to provide emergency services twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week in a designated area of the hospital. A hospital shall meet all the requirements for emergency facilities that are established by the department and shall provide emergency services in a manner that meets the requirements established by federal law for the medical screening and stabilization of patients, including women in active labor, who present to the hospital for emergency services.

Provides that a hospital providing emergency services under this act shall have, at a minimum, the following: (1) A physician who is qualified to provide emergency services immediately available in the hospital;

(2) A roster of on-call medical staff members; and

(3) Procedures to minimize a patient's risk until the patient is transported or transferred to another hospital if emergency services cannot be provided at the hospital to meet the needs of the patient in an emergency.

Requires a specialty hospital providing emergency services under this act to maintain a transfer agreement with a general hospital that establishes the process for patient transfers in a situation in which the specialty hospital cannot provide continuing care for a patient because of the specialty hospital's scope of services.

Does not apply to: (1) A specialty hospital that provides only psychiatric, pediatric, long-term acute care, or rehabilitative services;

(2) A hospital that was licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW prior to January 1, 2003; or

(3) A hospital designated as a critical access hospital under the provisions of Part A Title XVIII of the Social Security Act Section 1820, 42 U.S.C., 1395i-4.

Requires the department of health, in consultation with affected stakeholders such as hospitals, physicians, and nurses, to study the establishment of specialty hospitals, the requirements of this act, and the impact that specialty hospitals have on the delivery of health care.