

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5841

C 462 L 05

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of asthma.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Thibaudeau, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Shin).

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

Background: Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease characterized by episodes or attacks of inflammation and narrowing of small airways in response to asthma "triggers." Asthma attacks can vary from mild to life-threatening and involve shortness of breath, cough, wheezing, chest pain or tightness, or a combination of these symptoms. A systematic allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis also occurs in some asthma patients. Many factors can trigger an asthma attack, including allergens, infections, exercise, abrupt change in the weather, or exposure to airway irritants. Although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, asthma is the most common long-term disease of children. The Washington asthma prevalence rate is one of the highest in the nation, with an estimated 450,000 adults and 150,000 children with the disease.

In October 2004, Congress enacted the "Asthmatic Schoolchildren's Treatment and Health Management Act of 2004." The Act directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in making certain Public Health Service Act grants or any other asthma-related grant to a state, to give preference to states that require public elementary and secondary schools to allow students to self-administer medication to treat that student's asthma or anaphylaxis. Washington law does not currently meet the requirements of this federal act.

The State Health Care Authority (HCA) is the state agency which administers state employee insurance benefits and the Basic Health Plan, the state subsidized health insurance program for low income persons. The HCA is also generally responsible for coordinating efforts among state health care agencies regarding health care cost containment.

Summary: The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health are to develop a uniform policy for all school districts regarding the training of school staff about children with asthma. School districts must adopt policies regarding asthma rescue procedures.

All elementary and secondary schools must authorize any student to self-administer medication to treat his or her asthma or anaphylaxis where: (1) a health care practitioner has prescribed the medication and formulated a written treatment plan; (2) the student has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the medication; and (3) the student's parents have

completed any written documentation required by the school. The authorization must be renewed each school year.

On January 1, 2007 and 2009, the Health Care Authority is to issue a status report to the legislature summarizing any results it attains in exploring and coordinating among state agencies disease and demand management strategies for asthma and other chronic diseases.

The Department of Health is to design a state asthma plan by December 1, 2005, and implement the plan to the extent funds are available.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	40	7	
House	94	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 24, 2005