
SENATE BILL 6366

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser, Thibaudeau and Kline

Read first time 01/11/2006. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to preparation and response to pandemic influenza;
2 adding a new chapter to Title 70 RCW; and making an appropriation.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak of disease that occurs
6 when a new virus appears in the human population, causes serious
7 illness, and then spreads easily from person to person.

8 (2) Historically, pandemic influenza has occurred on average every
9 thirty years. Most recently, the Asian flu in 1957-58 and the Hong
10 Kong flu in 1968-69 killed seventy thousand and thirty-four thousand,
11 respectively, in the United States.

12 (3) Another influenza pandemic could emerge with little warning,
13 affecting a large number of people. Estimates are that another
14 pandemic influenza would cause more than two hundred thousand deaths in
15 our country, with as many as five thousand in Washington. Our state
16 could also expect ten thousand to twenty-four thousand people needing
17 hospital stays, and as many as a million people requiring outpatient
18 visits. During a severe pandemic these numbers could be much higher.
19 The economic losses could also be substantial.

1 (4) The current Avian or bird flu that is spreading around the
2 world has the potential to start a pandemic. There is yet no proven
3 vaccine, and antiviral medication supplies are limited and of unknown
4 effectiveness against a human version of the virus, leaving traditional
5 public health measures as the only means to slow the spread of the
6 disease. Given the global nature of a pandemic, as much as possible,
7 the state must be able to respond assuming only limited outside
8 resources and assistance will be available.

9 (5) An effective response to pandemic influenza in Washington must
10 focus at the local level and will depend on preestablished partnerships
11 and collaborative planning on a range of best-case and worst-case
12 scenarios. It will require flexibility and real-time decision making,
13 guided by accurate information. It will also depend on a well-informed
14 public that understands the dangers of pandemic influenza and the steps
15 necessary to prevent the spread of the disease.

16 (6) Preparation for pandemic flu will also enhance the capacity of
17 local public health jurisdictions to respond to other emergencies.

18 It is therefore the intent of the legislature that adequate
19 pandemic flu preparedness and response plans be developed and
20 implemented by local public health jurisdictions statewide in order to
21 limit the number of illnesses and deaths, preserve the continuity of
22 essential government and other community services, and minimize social
23 disruption and economic loss in the event of an influenza pandemic.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
25 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

26 (1) "Department" means the department of health.

27 (2) "Local health jurisdiction" means a local health department as
28 established under chapter 70.05 RCW, a combined city-county health
29 department as established under chapter 70.08 RCW, or a health district
30 established under chapter 70.05 or 70.46 RCW.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** By January 1, 2007, each local health
32 jurisdiction shall develop a pandemic flu preparedness and response
33 plan, consistent with requirements and standards established by the
34 department and the United States department of health and human
35 services, for the purpose of:

1 (1) Defining preparedness activities that should be undertaken
2 before a pandemic occurs that will enhance the effectiveness of
3 response measures;

4 (2) Describing the response, coordination, and decision-making
5 structure that will incorporate the local health jurisdiction, the
6 local health care system, other local response agencies, and state and
7 federal agencies during the pandemic;

8 (3) Defining the roles and responsibilities for the local health
9 jurisdiction, local health care partners, and local response agencies
10 during all phases of a pandemic;

11 (4) Describing public health interventions in a pandemic response
12 and the timing of such interventions;

13 (5) Serving as a guide for local health care system partners,
14 response agencies, and businesses in the development of pandemic
15 influenza response plans; and

16 (6) Providing technical support and information on which
17 preparedness and response actions are based.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Each jurisdiction shall develop its pandemic
19 flu preparedness and response plan in consultation with appropriate
20 public and private sector partners, including departments of emergency
21 management, law enforcement, school districts, hospitals and medical
22 professionals, tribal governments, and business organizations. At a
23 minimum, each plan shall address:

24 (1) Strategies to educate the public about the consequences of
25 influenza pandemic and what each person can do to prepare;

26 (2) Jurisdiction-wide disease surveillance programs, coordinated
27 with state and federal efforts, to detect pandemic influenza strains in
28 humans and animals;

29 (3) Mass vaccination plans and protocols to rapidly administer
30 vaccine and monitor vaccine effectiveness and safety;

31 (4) Guidelines for the utilization of antiviral medications for the
32 treatment and prevention of influenza;

33 (5) Implementation of nonmedical measures to decrease the spread of
34 the disease as guided by the epidemiology of the pandemic; and

35 (6) Strategies for maintaining health care and other essential
36 community services while limiting the spread of disease throughout the
37 duration of the pandemic.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The department shall provide technical
2 assistance and disburse funds as needed to support local health
3 jurisdictions in developing their pandemic flu preparedness and
4 response plans. Upon receipt of a plan determined by the department to
5 meet its established requirements and standards, additional funding
6 shall be provided to a district to support the preparedness response
7 activities identified in the plan, including but not limited to:

8 (1) Education, information, and outreach, in multiple languages, to
9 increase community preparedness and reduce the spread of the disease
10 should it occur;

11 (2) Development of materials and systems to be used in the event of
12 a pandemic to keep the public informed about the influenza, the course
13 of the pandemic, and response activities;

14 (3) Training and response drills for local health jurisdiction
15 staff, law enforcement, health care providers, and others with
16 responsibilities identified in the plan;

17 (4) Enhancement of the communicable disease surveillance system;
18 and

19 (5) Development of coordination and communication systems among
20 responding agencies.

21 Where appropriate, these activities shall be coordinated and funded
22 on a regional or statewide basis.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute
24 a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The sum of twenty million dollars, or as
26 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year
27 ending June 30, 2007, from the general fund to the department of health
28 for the purposes of this act.

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