
SENATE BILL 6469

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Thibaudeau, Keiser, Haugen, Franklin, Brown, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Spanel, Kline and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/12/2006. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of the blue ribbon commission on
2 health care cost and access; and creating new sections.

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

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

5 (1) The availability and affordability of quality health care is of
6 critical importance to the well-being of Washington residents, yet the
7 cost of health care is increasing at a disproportionately high rate;

8 (2) These increasing costs are placing quality care beyond the
9 reach of a growing number of Washington citizens and contributing to
10 health care expenditures that strain the resources of individuals,
11 businesses, and public programs;

12 (3) Efforts by public and private purchasers to control
13 expenditures, and the stress these efforts place on the stability of
14 the health care work force and viability of health care facilities,
15 threaten to reduce access to quality care for all residents of the
16 state; and

17 (4) Addressing this issue demands a reasoned and constructive
18 discussion regarding the objectives of the state's health care system,

1 and a coordinated, coherent, and sustainable plan to achieve these
2 objectives.

3 It is the intent of the legislature, in establishing the blue
4 ribbon commission on health care cost and access, to provide a forum
5 for the development and implementation of long-term strategies which
6 assure access to secure, appropriate, and affordable care for all
7 Washington residents.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The blue ribbon commission on health care
9 cost and access is established, to include the following thirteen
10 members:

11 (1) Two members from each caucus of the senate, appointed by the
12 president of the senate, and two members from each caucus of the house
13 of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of
14 representatives;

15 (2) The governor, or her designee, who shall serve as chair of the
16 commission;

17 (3) The insurance commissioner, or his designee;

18 (4) The assistant secretary for health and recovery services in the
19 department of social and health services;

20 (5) The secretary of the department of health; and

21 (6) The administrator of the health care authority.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Consistent with funds appropriated
23 specifically for this purpose, the blue ribbon commission on health
24 care cost and access may hire staff or contract for professional
25 assistance. The office of financial management, other state agencies,
26 the senate, and the house of representatives shall provide staff
27 support upon request of the commission.

28 (2) The commission shall establish ad hoc technical advisory
29 committees as appropriate, to include representatives of business,
30 employee organizations, medical treatment providers, pharmaceutical
31 manufacturers, public health officials, health carriers, state
32 agencies, health policy experts, consumer organizations, community-
33 based regional health care organizations, the general public, and any
34 others with an interest in or expertise regarding the work of the
35 commission. Committee members shall not be compensated or reimbursed
36 for related travel expenses.

1 (3) In the conduct of its business, the commission shall have
2 access to all health-related data available to state agencies by
3 statute. The head of each agency shall provide the commission with all
4 requested data or other relevant information maintained by the agency
5 in a timely and easy-to-comprehend manner.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** By December 1, 2006, the blue ribbon
7 commission on health care cost and access shall develop a sustainable
8 five-year plan to substantially improve access to affordable health
9 care for all Washington residents. The plan shall:

10 (1) Be based on explicit, measurable goals reflecting a realistic
11 assessment of the current status of Washington's health care system,
12 the medical treatment and services to which all Washington residents
13 should have access, and the financial and other resources available to
14 provide them;

15 (2) Identify the most significant factors contributing to
16 increasingly inaccessible and unaffordable health care and health care
17 insurance in Washington state;

18 (3) Include a list of strategies prioritized by their likelihood to
19 cost-effectively address these factors and achieve the identified
20 goals;

21 (4) Identify what must be done, by whom, and by when to assure
22 implementation of each of the listed strategies, including any
23 necessary changes in statute or administrative rule;

24 (5) Estimate the cost to the responsible party of implementing the
25 listed strategies;

26 (6) Build a foundation for subsequent long-term plans to assure on-
27 going access for all Washington residents to affordable health care.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If specific funding for the purposes of this
29 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by
30 June 30, 2006, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and
31 void.

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