# HOUSE BILL REPORT
# ESSB 5100

### As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

**Title:** An act relating to information for students regarding health insurance.

**Brief Description:** Regarding health insurance information for students.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, McAuliffe, Regala, Fairley, Shin, Weinstein, Murray, Keiser, Prentice, Kline, Spanel, Fraser, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen).

**Brief History:**
**Committee Activity:**
Education:  3/27/07, 3/29/07 [DPA].

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### Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
### (As Amended by House Committee)

- Requires public schools to ask whether students have health insurance, and to provide information about health insurance programs to parents and guardians of students for whom such coverage is not indicated.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:**  Do pass as amended.  Signed by 9 members:  Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

**Staff:**  Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

**Background:**

School districts are currently required to conduct a number of health-related activities, including screenings for vision, hearing, and scoliosis; review of immunization records; and attainment of a medication or treatment plan for a child with a life-threatening health condition.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Many school districts provide an informational packet that includes information on public insurance programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, as well as other programs like free and reduced-price meals.  The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in conjunction with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and other departments, distributes a packet of informational materials to all 296 school districts.  The 285 school districts participating in the food programs are required by the United States Department of Agriculture to distribute the packet to ensure the application for free and reduced-price meals is made available.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

Beginning with the 2008-09 school year's enrollment process, public schools are required to ask whether students have health insurance.  If the parent or guardian does not provide a response or indicates the student is not insured, either a school, or a designated community health care collaborative under a written contract with a school district, must provide parents with information about Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.  Schools must provide this information in writing via postal mail, electronic mail, or existing communication channels by December 1, 2008.

The OSPI must work with the DSHS, the Office of the Education Ombudsman (OEO) and community health care collaboratives to develop a one-page informational sheet on health insurance for children, and the OSPI and the OEO must post the informational sheet on their web sites by August 2008.  Beginning December 1, 2008, schools must report annually to the OSPI the number of students that are reported as not having health insurance.  In addition, the agencies must coordinate their work with the Select Interim Legislative Task Force on Comprehensive School Health (Task Force) established by Chapter 5, Laws of 2007.

A "community health care collaborative" is defined.

**Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

The implementation dates are moved from 2007 to 2008, the OEO is included in the preparation and publication of the one-page information sheet, and the agencies are directed to coordinate their work with the Task Force established by Chapter 5, Laws of 2007.

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**Appropriation:**  None.

**Fiscal Note:**  Not requested.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:**  The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) When the children's insurance bill was passed, it did not include provisions for how the children will be identified and parents notified of the insurance options.  This bill will help address those issues, and is a similar program to what has been done in Connecticut, which has been a very cost effective program.  Most every school puts out newsletters and other communications to parents.  This bill allows use of existing communication channels to minimize cost and impact at the local level.  This will also allow for collection of better data than we currently have.

Community health care collaboratives mature in predictable phases, starting with partnerships, common solutions, and community-owned solutions.  There have been great results from these collaboratives, with thousands of kids receiving better health care and better access to that care.  The requirements of this bill to notify parents about insurance options is a good first step, and formalizes the relationships between collaboratives and schools.  These relationships allow for more effective outreach to parents regarding options for health coverage for their children.  Schools are the most logical place for collaboratives to find out which children do not have health coverage.  There are already school districts using the strategies outlined in this bill, and they have proven very effective.

(In support with concerns) This is a great concept, but may impose further unfunded mandates on schools.

(Opposed) This adds to the long list of unfunded mandates that schools are having to deal with.

**Persons Testifying:**  (In support) Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Holly Detzler, Communities Connect; Sue Sharpe, Communities Connect and Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access; and Wendy Carr, Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access.

(In support with concerns) Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

(Opposed) Mitch Denning, Alliance of Educational Associations.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:**  None.