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**Health Care & Wellness  
Committee**

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**HB 2668**

**Brief Description:** Expanding programs for persons needing long-term care.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morrell, Green, Cody, Hunt, McCoy, Wallace, Pedersen, Campbell, McIntire, Conway, Simpson, Kenney and Darneille.

<p><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expands services to seniors needing assistance with long-term care.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 1/23/08

**Staff:** Dave Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:**

The long-term care task force was created in 2005 in legislation at the request of Governor Gregoire. The task force met for two and a half years, and held its last meeting in July 2007. The task force received testimony related to the fact that most long-term care services are provided by family members and informal caregivers.

One of the themes that emerged in task force meetings was that informal caregivers – family, friends, and neighbors who make up the vast majority of care providers – need more access to information, community services, respite, equipment, counseling, training, and other forms of support to continue to care for loved ones in their homes and neighborhoods for as long as possible. Further, information was presented to the task force that better use of preventive health care strategies and improved management of chronic care would promote and sustain informal caregiving around the state.

**Summary of Bill:**

Caregivers who provide critical health and safety support to long-term care recipients may receive a one-time voucher benefit which may be used for respite or other services. The Department of

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Social and Health Services (DSHS) will develop a caregiver assessment and referral tool to determine eligibility for this benefit and other services. Statewide services provided by DSHS and the area agencies on aging will include long-term care planning, counseling, crisis intervention, and streamlined access to community based services.

Adult family and boarding homes are not required to develop plans of care or discharge for respite care services.

The Department of Health is directed to develop a statewide senior falls prevention program. The program will include affordable senior focused exercise programs, community education, and assessments on falls risk identification and reduction.

DSHS is directed to provide additional support to residents in community settings who exhibit challenging behaviors that put them at risk for institutional placement.

A senior dental access project is proposed. The program will provide enhanced reimbursement rates for certified dentists who provide specific procedures and for medical providers who provide preventive oral health services. Coordination with the University of Washington and outreach with the community is identified.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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