

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6021

As of January 6, 2012

Title: An act relating to air rescue or evacuation services.

Brief Description: Regulating air rescue or evacuation services.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Fain.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance: 1/11/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & INSURANCE

Staff: Edward Redmond (786-7471)

Background: In 2006 legislation was passed in response to the Office of Insurance Commissioner's 2005 feasibility study analyzing whether air ambulance services should be regulated as insurers or whether an alternative consumer protection method should be established for subscribers of air ambulance services. SB 6231 clarified that a private air ambulance service provider that solicits and accepts membership subscriptions, charges fees, and provides services is not considered to be an insurer under Washington's Insurance Code if the service meets licensure and aeromedical transport services criteria, has been in operation in Washington for a minimum of two years, and submits evidence of compliance with the Office of Insurance Commissioner.

At present, it is unclear whether subscription services that provide rescue, evacuation, emergency transport, and crisis management and consulting services related to an emergency should be regulated as insurers or whether an alternative consumer protection method should be established for subscribers of such services.

Summary of Bill: A subscription service that provides rescue, evacuation, emergency transport, and crisis management and consulting services related to an emergency is not an insurer as defined by statute. If applicable, the subscription service must either fulfill the licensing requirements within the jurisdiction in which services are rendered or contract with a service provider that has satisfied such licensure requirements. A service provider must satisfy the statutory private air ambulance licensure and accreditation requirements prior to providing air ambulance services within the state. A subscription service is not required to own the means of transportation used to provide such services.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.