

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2310

As Passed House:
February 13, 2014

Title: An act relating to safety equipment for individual providers.

Brief Description: Concerning safety equipment for individual providers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Riccelli, Cody, Green, Van De Wege, Tharinger, Morrell, Johnson, Parker, Stonier, Reykdal, Jinkins and Kochmar).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/30/14, 2/3/14 [DPS];

Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services: 2/6/14 [DPS(HCW)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/14, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority to assist Medicaid clients in accessing gloves as part of their benefits for use by their individual providers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clibborn, DeBolt, Green, G. Hunt, Jinkins, Manweller, Moeller, Morrell, Ross, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Health Care & Wellness be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Morrell, Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Green, G. Hunt, Kagi, Ormsby, Ross, Schmick and Tharinger.

Staff: James Kettel (786-7123).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) provides publicly funded personal care services to eligible clients who live in their own home and are elderly or have developmental disabilities. Personal care services include assistance with various tasks such as toileting, bathing, dressing, ambulating, meal preparation, and household chores. There are two ways in which personal care services may be provided in the client's home: (1) by an individual provider; or (2) by an employee of a home care agency (agency provider). Individual providers are hired and supervised by the client they care for and are paid through a direct contract with the Department.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) must coordinate with the Health Care Authority (Authority) to assist Medicaid clients in accessing gloves as part of their health benefit for use by their individual providers. The agencies' assistance must facilitate access to gloves on a monthly basis that is consistent with federal matching fund requirements under Medicaid. The Department must work with the Authority to develop a methodology for non-Medicaid clients to receive gloves on a monthly basis and in a cost-effective and easy-to-access manner.

Legislative findings are made regarding the importance of universal precautions for home care clients and workers who provide direct care for them.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Health Care & Wellness):

(In support) Universal precautions are important health and safety protections for clients and home care workers who provide direct care for their clients. The use of personal protective equipment, such as gloves, is a key tool to protect against bloodborne pathogens such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus. Some in-home care clients have behaviors that put others at risk for contagions. Caring for in-home care clients requires cleanliness to prevent the spread of disease. This is a small but important way to protect workers and clients.

Many Medicaid clients are eligible to receive gloves but do not have them in the home because they are either not aware of the benefit or do not use the benefit. Most clients are eligible to receive gloves when prescribed by the primary care provider, but only 19,000 out of 58,000 home- and community-based clients are accessing these gloves. Many individual providers are required to pay for gloves themselves. Too many caregivers do not have ready access to gloves to protect their clients, the public, or themselves because the current system is not very effective. This benefit has been available, but it has been hard to access. Agency providers issue gloves as a general practice.

This bill will improve the availability and use of gloves by individual providers. This bill provides an efficient, cost-effective, and accountable way of assuring that gloves are available to keep caregivers, their clients, and the public safe.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services):

(In support) Access to safety equipment, including gloves, is important for clients and for workers. Utilization data shows that only 19,000 out of the roughly 58,000 clients receiving personal care currently access gloves for their provider. Outreach from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Health Care Authority (HCA) may help additional workers access gloves. Provider associations and the Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging look forward to working with DSHS and HCA. Home care agencies already provide safety equipment, including gloves, to all workers. Easy access to gloves is especially important in cases where a client is incontinent.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Health Care & Wellness): Representative Riccelli, prime sponsor; Linda Lee, Jane Hauff, and Steve Breauz, Service Employees International Union #775 Northwest; Bea Rector, Department of Social and Health Services; Roy Walker, Olympic Area Agency on Aging; and Pete Nazzal, Catholic Community Services.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services): Bill Moss, Department of Social and Health Services; Steve Breauz, Service Employees International Union 775; Cathy Knight, Washington Association Agency on Aging; and Peter Nazzal, Catholic Community Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Health Care & Wellness): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services): None.