
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2044

Brief Description: Concerning emergency medical services.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Cody and Griffey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes emergency medical services providers to establish community assistance referral and education services programs (programs) to provide community outreach and education to promote injury and illness prevention.
- Allows advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics to provide care in nonemergency and non-life-threatening situations if they are participating in a program and the care provided does not exceed their training and certification.
- Permits ambulance services to transport patients to nonhospital facilities, such as urgent care clinics, mental health facilities, and chemical dependency facilities.

Hearing Date: 2/18/15

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Community Assistance Referral and Education Services Programs.

In 2013 legislation was enacted to allow fire departments to establish community assistance referral and education services programs (programs). These programs provide community outreach and assistance to residents to promote injury and illness prevention. The programs should identify members of the community who use the 911 system for nonemergency or nonurgent assistant calls. The programs connect residents with health care professionals, low-cost medication programs, and other social services. The programs are required to measure reductions in the repeated use of the 911 system and any associated reductions in avoidable emergency department trips.

Emergency Medical Services Personnel.

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.

Emergency medical service (EMS) personnel are certified by the Department of Health, which is also responsible for their discipline in cases involving unprofessional conduct. There are four primary categories of EMS personnel: paramedics, intermediate life support technicians, emergency medical technicians, and first responders. Emergency medical service personnel may only provide services within the scope of care established in the curriculum of the person's level of certification or any specialized training. In addition, the services must be included in the protocols of each county's medical program director.

Ambulance Services.

Ambulance services provide transportation services for the ill and injured according to patient care procedures. Patient care procedures are written guidelines adopted by regional emergency medical services and trauma care councils that identify several elements necessary to coordinate the provision of emergency services, including the type of facility to receive the patient.

Summary of Bill:

Emergency medical services providers are allowed to establish community assistance referral and education services programs (programs), just as fire departments may currently do. The programs may establish partnerships with hospitals to reduce readmissions. The authority for these programs to hire health care professionals is extended to include the employment of certified advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics as long as they are practicing under the authority of their medical program director and within the scope of their practice.

The term "emergency medical service intermediate life support technician" is changed to "advanced emergency medical technician." An exception to the prohibition against advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics providing care in nonemergency and non-life-threatening situations is established for activities performed pursuant to a program. The exception allows advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics to provide care under the supervision and direction of their medical program director if it does not exceed their training and certification. Immunity from liability that generally applies to emergency medical services providers for acts and omissions related to the provision of emergency medical services is extended to advanced emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and medical program directors participating in a program. It is specified that medical program directors make determinations of satisfactory performance and education for the recertification of advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

Ambulance services may transport patients to nonhospital facilities, such as urgent care clinics, mental health facilities, and chemical dependency facilities to the extent authorized in regional emergency medical services and trauma care plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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