
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1531

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session

By House Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Bronoske, Berry, Ramel, Reed, Duerr, Kloba, Macri, Parshley, Peterson, Ormsby, Pollet, Scott, Doglio, Hill, and Simmons)

READ FIRST TIME 02/21/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to preserving the ability of public officials to
2 address communicable diseases using scientifically proven measures to
3 control the spread of such diseases; adding a new section to chapter
4 70.54 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

7 (a) Communicable diseases remain a real threat to our communities
8 and many are increasing in prevalence and severity. There are over
9 100 notifiable conditions that are required to be reported to local
10 and state public health, the vast majority of which are communicable
11 diseases.

12 (b) The H1N1 virus, or avian flu, remains a nationwide threat
13 with 14 Washingtonians contracting this illness due to exposure to
14 infected poultry in 2024. Tuberculosis remains prevalent despite the
15 availability of effective treatment, with several local health
16 jurisdictions experiencing their first active cases of tuberculosis
17 in over a decade. Sexually transmitted infection rates are also
18 increasing, particularly syphilis and gonorrhea, both of which can
19 have serious health impacts if left untreated. For example, untreated
20 syphilis during pregnancy can result in congenital syphilis that
21 increases rates of stillbirth, disability, and death in infants.

1 (c) To address these challenges, the ability for state and local
2 health officials to educate the public about evidence-based measures
3 that use the best available science is critical to control the spread
4 of communicable diseases.

5 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to ensure that the public
6 receives timely, well-researched, evidence-based, and science-driven
7 information to make informed choices so that they can take personal
8 control of their health and the health of their families.

9 (3) The legislature does not intend by this enactment to modify,
10 limit, or expand any existing requirement or establish any new
11 requirement for any individual to receive any vaccine or take any
12 other similar measure to control the spread of communicable disease,
13 nor does the legislature intend by this enactment to modify, limit,
14 or expand any existing authority or grant any new authority to
15 establish any such requirement.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.54
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) It is the policy of the state that public health responses to
19 address communicable diseases be guided by the best available science
20 on the safety and efficacy of evidence-based measures to control the
21 spread of such diseases, including immunizations and vaccines.

22 (2) Consistent with the policy in subsection (1) of this section,
23 the state and local health officials must, within available
24 resources, implement and promote evidence-based, appropriate measures
25 to control the spread of communicable diseases, including
26 immunizations and vaccines. The state and its political subdivisions
27 may not enact statutes, ordinances, rules, or policies that prohibit
28 the implementation and promotion of such measures. Any such statute,
29 ordinance, rule, or policy in place on the effective date of this
30 section is hereby declared null and void.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
32 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
33 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
34 effect immediately.

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