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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5321**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, Bateman, Chapman, Cleveland, Dhingra, Frame, Harris, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Lovelett, Lovick, Orwall, Riccelli, Salomon, Slatter, Stanford, Trudeau, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to access at public postsecondary educational  
2 institutions to medication abortion; and adding a new chapter to  
3 Title 28B RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and declares the  
6 following:

7 (1) Access to abortion is a human right, an integral part of  
8 essential health care, and vital for promoting public health.

9 (2) There are approximately 196,000 pregnancy capable students  
10 attending Washington's public institutions of higher education and  
11 many of these students need access to abortion services each year. A  
12 central mission of Washington's student health centers serving these  
13 institutions is to minimize the negative impact of health concerns on  
14 students' studies and to facilitate retention and graduation.

15 (3) Students seeking pregnancy termination face substantial  
16 travel, financial, and logistical barriers. Students must travel as  
17 far as 78 miles, or over four hours on public transit, round trip to  
18 the nearest abortion-providing facility, and the average wait time  
19 for an appointment is 10 days. The supreme court *Dobbs v. Jackson*  
20 *women's health organization* decision has increased the burden on  
21 abortion-providing facilities in the state, meaning longer wait times

1 for students needing to access care. A 2024 report from senator Maria  
2 Cantwell's office states that clinics in Oregon have already seen a  
3 50 percent increase in patients from Washington state traveling for  
4 abortion care, and the average wait times in Washington for abortion  
5 appointments in a Seattle area clinic have already increased by one  
6 week due to the influx of patients traveling from out of state. These  
7 financial and time burdens negatively impact academic performance,  
8 mental health, and physical health.

9 (4) Many of Washington's public institutions of higher education  
10 have student health centers, but only two campuses with student  
11 health centers are known to be in the process of implementing  
12 abortion services. Medication abortion is extremely safe,  
13 efficacious, and cost-effective. Research shows that the provision of  
14 medication abortion in student health centers is safe, effective, and  
15 feasible.

16 (5) Because medication abortion is recognized as a safe and  
17 effective treatment for pregnancy termination and a health service  
18 every pregnant person in the state has the legal right to choose, it  
19 is the intent of the legislature that public institutions of higher  
20 education make medication abortion as accessible and cost-effective  
21 for students as possible.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
23 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
24 otherwise.

25 (1) "Council" means the Washington student achievement council as  
26 defined in RCW 28B.77.010.

27 (2) "Medication abortion" has the same meaning as  
28 "abortion medications" in RCW 69.41.050.

29 (3) "Public institution of higher education" or "public  
30 institutions of higher education" means institutions of higher  
31 education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.

32 (4) "Student health center" means a clinic or health center  
33 providing physical health care services to students operated by  
34 public institutions of higher education.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) By the start of the 2026-27 academic  
36 year, each student health center must offer access to medication  
37 abortion, either through a public program that connects patients in  
38 Washington to reproductive health services or through other delivery

1 methods. This service may be offered by providers at the student  
2 health center or through telehealth services, or by providers  
3 associated with a public program that connects patients in Washington  
4 to reproductive health services.

5 (2) By the start of the 2026-27 academic year, each public  
6 institution of higher education that does not operate a student  
7 health center must provide information and referral services for  
8 medication abortion to students seeking such services. The  
9 institution must:

10 (a)(i) Provide referrals to qualified health care providers who  
11 can lawfully administer medication abortion;

12 (ii) Referrals must include the contact information for at least  
13 two qualified health care organizations and at least one telehealth  
14 organization;

15 (b) Offer private and accessible space on campus for the student  
16 to participate in telehealth appointments upon a student's request  
17 for telehealth accommodation;

18 (c) Offer any necessary technical support for students using  
19 telehealth services, including reliable internet access; and

20 (d) Offer electronic devices to access telehealth services.

21 (3)(a) All public institutions of higher education must maintain  
22 a comprehensive health services website that provides clear,  
23 accessible information and resources regarding reproductive health  
24 services including, but not limited to, prenatal care and options for  
25 pregnancy termination.

26 (b) The website must include:

27 (i) Detailed instructions for scheduling appointments, with  
28 contact information for both pregnancy-related services and  
29 behavioral health services;

30 (ii) Links and contact information for campus resources that  
31 assist students in requesting academic accommodations, including  
32 absences, rescheduling exams, or adjusting other academic  
33 requirements due to pregnancy, recovery from medical treatment, or  
34 related conditions; and

35 (iii) An unbroken link and accurate description that directs  
36 students to the abortion page of the sexual and reproductive health  
37 section of the department of health's website.

1        NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 4.**        Sections 1 through 3 of this act  
2        constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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