

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5854

C 389 L 95
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring that health plans must allow women a choice of primary care providers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Spanel, Wood, Prentice, Winsley, Rasmussen, Hale, Kohl, McCaslin, Fairley, Long, Loveland, Franklin, Roach, Moyer, Quigley, McAuliffe, Drew and Wojahn).

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care
House Committee on Health Care

Background: As health insurance moves more rapidly toward integrated delivery systems that attempt to control costs by regulating enrollees' access to certain types of health care providers, many have become concerned that they may lose access to the providers they use most frequently.

A 1993 Gallup poll found that most women consider their obstetrician/gynecologist as their primary health care provider, and the provider from whom they have had their most recent examination. Almost 80 percent of these women currently access their obstetrician/gynecologist directly, without going through a gatekeeper. Almost all would object to having to use a gatekeeper.

Summary: Health carriers as defined in the act must ensure that female patients have direct access to women's health care services from the practitioner of their choice. Women's health care practitioners include at least those generally recognized women's health specialists licensed as physicians, osteopaths, their assistants, or advanced registered nurse practitioners.

Health carriers may restrict women patients to seeing only those practitioners who have signed agreements with the health care carrier.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)

Conference Committee

House	94	2
Senate	43	0

Effective: July 23, 1995