

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1869

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to transparency of health care cost information.

Brief Description: Concerning the transparency of health care cost information.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Bailey, Hinkle, Anderson, Ericksen and Kelley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/13/09, 2/20/09 [DPS].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 3/4/09, 95-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/2/09, 46-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/22/09, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the disclosure of all fees and charges for health care services by health care providers and licensed health care facilities, at the request of a patient.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146)

Background:

Currently, there is little transparency in the cost of health care services for consumers. Most health care delivered currently is paid primarily by a third party; either a health insurance carrier or a public program that purchases health care for covered individuals. Transparency and better public information on the cost and quality of health care can help providers improve by benchmarking their performance against others, encouraging private insurers and

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.

public programs to reward quality and efficiency, and helping patients make informed choices about their care.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The substitute bill requires the disclosure of all fees and charges for health care services by health care providers and licensed facilities, at the request of the patient. Providers may refer the patient to their insurer for additional information on negotiated charges and fees and any applicable cost-sharing responsibilities of the patient.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

Providers and facilities may refer a patient to the patient's insurer for specific information on the insurer's charges and fees, any cost-sharing responsibilities required of the patient, and the network status of ancillary providers who may or may not share the same network status as the provider or facility. Providers and facilities must post a sign in patient registration areas indicating patients may ask about the estimated charges of the health services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important for consumers to have accurate information on the costs and fees related to the delivery of their health care. It is not easy for a consumer to have access to information about fees and charges related to health care services provided by providers or health care facilities.

(With concerns) The language of the bill needs to be more specific about what exactly the provider or health care facility must provide to the patient.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Bailey, prime sponsor; Roger Stark, Washington Policy Center; Terry Hansen; and Troy Nichols, National Federal of Independent Business.

(With concerns) Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Hospital Association; and Susie Tracy, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.