

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5038

As Passed House:

January 27, 1995

Title: An act relating to modifying time periods for adoption of health benefits and standards.

Brief Description: Extending time periods for certain health care reform activities.

Sponsors: Senator Quigley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/31/95 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/1/95, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Dyer, Chair; Backlund, Vice Chair; Hymes, Vice Chair; Casada; Crouse; Morris; Sherstad and Skinner.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Dellwo, Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Conway.

Staff: Bill Hagens (786-7131).

Background: The Washington Health Services Act was enacted into law in 1993 and includes the following elements: universal access by 1999; employer/individual mandates; a uniform set of health services, including the Uniform Benefits Package [UBP] and population-based public health services; assistance for low-income persons through the Basic Health Plan [BHP] and Medicaid expansion; reformed insuring entities [Certified Health Plans] and health purchasing insurance cooperatives; capitated-managed care; a maximum premium; a state-wide health data system; a full-time commission; taxes upon tobacco, alcohol, hospitals and certified health plans allocated to administration, BHP and medicaid expansion; health data system, and public health services.

The Washington Health Services Commission was required to submit a proposed uniform benefits package to the Legislature by December 1, 1994. Provisions related to the approval of the uniform benefits package state:

The legislature may disapprove of the uniform benefits package . . . by an act of law any time prior to the thirtieth day of the following regular legislative session. If such disapproval action is taken, the commission shall resubmit a modified package to the legislature within fifteen days of the disapproval. If the legislature does not disapprove or modify the package by an act of law by the end of that regular session, the package is deemed approved.

In effect, if the Legislature does not disapprove by the end of February 8, 1995, the UBP is deemed approved effective July 1, 1995. Disapproval must be in the form of a statutory measure adopted by a constitutional majority of the House and Senate and signed by the Governor.

The proponents of this measure feel that the current procedure unnecessarily limits the time legislators would have to review the content of the Uniform Benefits Package.

Summary of Amended Bill: Current procedures are deleted. The commission's proposed Uniform Benefits Package will be considered a recommendation to the Legislature. The Legislature could take any action it thought appropriate without a time limitation.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Provisions are deleted that change the major effective date of the 1993 act from July 1, 1995, to December 31, 1995, and change the Uniform Benefit Package legislative disapproval date from the 30th to the last day of session.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.