
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 257

AN ACT CONCERNING HEPATITIS C TESTING.

SUMMARY:

This bill generally requires licensed primary care physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants (“primary care providers”) to offer to provide or order a hepatitis C screening or diagnostic test for patients born between 1945 and 1965, when providing services to these patients.

The requirement does not apply when the provider reasonably believes that the patient (1) is being treated for a life-threatening emergency, (2) has previously been offered or received a hepatitis C screening test, or (3) lacks the capacity to consent.

Under the bill, a “hepatitis C screening test” is a laboratory test that detects the presence of hepatitis C virus antibodies in the blood. If a primary care provider provides or orders such a test and receives notice that it is reactive, the provider must offer continuing care relating to the test or refer the patient to another health care provider for such care. The continuing care must include a hepatitis C diagnostic test (a laboratory test that detects the presence of hepatitis C virus in the blood and confirms whether the patient has a hepatitis C virus infection).

The bill defines “primary care” as family medicine, general pediatrics, primary care, internal medicine, primary care obstetrics, or primary care gynecology, without regard to board certification.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

BACKGROUND

Hepatitis C

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that infects the liver and can cause liver cirrhosis, cancer, liver failure, or death. The disease can be acute or chronic. Acute hepatitis C is less severe but often develops into chronic hepatitis C.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 26 Nay 0 (03/21/2014)