



Communities Connect

Better Health for More People at Less Cost



**Health Policy Proposal
Reintroducing Senate Bill 5100 –
Regarding Health Insurance Information for Students
(As of October 15, 2007)**

The Issue

Presently there is no consistent resource for identifying uninsured children in our state. This piece of information is critical if we intend to “Cover All Kids” by 2010. Also we need a reliable source that provides a true measure of the number of uninsured children in the State that does not presently exist.

Many Communities Connect members including the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare have developed and are operating school outreach programs where school districts consistently identify a list of uninsured students through registration, emergency contact sheets or sports physicals. Those lists are then followed up by WAHA staff to evaluate and to support enrollment in state sponsored health programs or other resources. The Alliance program includes school board agreements with six districts, tested outreach strategies, well designed collateral materials, and a simple tracking and reporting system that informs ongoing improvement efforts. Although this strategy has been implemented and is working effectively in a number of Communities Connect communities it is not a consistent practice throughout the state.

The Legislative Solution

SB 5100 was introduced in the 2007 session, passed the Senate, the House Education Committee and was referred to Appropriations where it died. The bill required schools to collect health insurance coverage information at registration, and encouraged follow-up mailings aimed at providing families information about state health insurance programs. The amended language for the bill as passed in the Senate allowed for schools to share the burden of identifying and following – up with families in need of coverage with community healthcare collaboratives who are already doing some of this work in communities across the state.

The amended bill was consistent with the “**Blue Ribbon Commission on Healthcare Costs and Access” Recommendation #12:** Ensure the health of the next generation by linking insurance coverage with policies that improve children’s health

- *Partner with schools and other organizations to provide information on private and public sector insurance options available to families (pg. 13 of the report)*

Financial Impact

The estimated cost of this proposal is minimal. Schools already have students complete registration forms and other documents. The mailings could be minimal. The cost would be in the larger follow-up strategies which would be optional and not part of the bill.