

Legislative Analysis



ABORTION REPORTS: REVISE INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED

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House Bill 4406 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. John Espinoza
Committee: Health Policy

First Analysis (10-21-09)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would include information on Hispanic origin in the demographic information collected on the report required to be filed for each abortion performed in the state.

FISCAL IMPACT: House Bill 4406 will create modest one-time state costs for the Department of Community Health to notify physicians of the additional reporting requirement, and to modify forms and instructions to include the additional reporting requirement.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Public Health Code requires a physician who performs an abortion to report the performance of each procedure to the Department of Community Health. The information to be contained in the report is controlled by statute and includes information such as the age of the woman at the time of the abortion and the woman's race. However, other health-reporting forms used by DCH – certificate of death, HIV/AIDS report, cancer surveillance forms, and fetal death forms – all include information regarding Hispanic origin. Even the upcoming 2010 national census report will include Hispanic origin in the demographic data. It has been recommended that the form used by physicians to report an abortion procedure be revised to include information on Hispanic ethnicity.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4406 would amend the Public Health Code to require a physician to include, if applicable, the Hispanic ethnicity of the woman in the report.

MCL 333.2835

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The bill is similar to House Bill 6045 that was introduced in the 2007-2008 legislative session. That bill, which was not scheduled for a hearing, would have required information regarding a woman's ethnicity to be included in the report.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill's requirement would bring the form used by physicians to report an abortion procedure into conformity with other health-related forms used by the Department of Community Health in collecting health-related information. Collecting demographic information, such as race and ethnic origins, can help health agencies identify underserved populations. The information can also highlight populations that need interventions to address a health concern. Research shows that abortion procedures decrease in areas where women have access to accurate information. Thus, the bill could, among many things, aid health professionals in identifying geographic areas in which informational services need to be increased or revised for greater educational benefit.

Response:

Because demographic data can aid health policy and health workers in the creation and delivery of health-related services, the bill should be expanded to include the data collection of all ethnic origins. Further, the bill should be amended to include an effective date that would provide sufficient time for the DCH to revise the form and educate abortion providers about the change.

POSITIONS:

Right to Life of Michigan supports the bill. (10-20-09)

A representative of the ACLU of Michigan testified in support of the bill. (10-20-09)

The Michigan Catholic Conference indicated support for the bill. (10-20-09)

The Department of Community Health indicated support for the bill with changes, such as the addition of an effective date. (10-20-09)

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan indicated a position of neutrality on the bill. (10-20-09)

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