

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

2/20/2025

Bill: 1st Substitute HB 257 – Pharmacy Benefit Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Norman K Thurston

Floor Sponsor: Senator Evan J. Vickers

UASD Position:

This Bill amends provisions related to health insurance pharmacy benefits.

Discussion: This Bill is a companion to HCR 2, with HCR 2 addressing the public sector and the 2nd substitute HB 257 addressing the private sector. It requires health insurance companies to ensure that rebates are used for the benefit of the patient. If this Bill is adopted, every employer in the state would have the opportunity to purchase a plan with this benefit, but they would not be required to do so. There was no public comment.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st Substitute HB 257 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st Substitute HB 152 – Health Care Facilities Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Katy Hall

Floor Sponsor: Senator Keith Grover

UASD Position:

This Bill addresses satellite emergency departments.

Discussion: This Bill defines terms, establishes requirements for certain satellite emergency departments, and limits the number of satellite emergency departments that a healthcare organization may operate. House Amendment 1 was adopted by the Committee, adding that a certified "or board certified" medical laboratory scientist qualifies as personnel meeting the standards set in the Bill. The Bill addresses the growing number of freestanding emergency service centers along the Wasatch Front. During the sponsor's visits to these centers, she observed significant differences in equipment and staff experience levels. To address these disparities, the Bill requires freestanding emergency departments in first and second-class counties to meet minimum standards for equipment and personnel.

Representative Hall explained that limiting the requirements to first and second-class counties was in response to concerns from rural counties, which may not be able to meet the proposed standards. She also highlighted the Bill's emphasis on price transparency for patients seeking emergency treatment, as outlined in lines 82-101. Additionally, the Bill addresses limitations in the current Department of Health and Human Services ("DHHS") rules that restrict the number of facilities. The proposed changes in lines 102-104 allow for more facilities to be established.

The 1st substitute revises DHHS license renewal requirements to align with the new guidelines in the Bill. These changes were made in collaboration with the Utah Hospital Association, which sought more control over licensing. Senator Plumb spoke in support of the Bill, and members of the public also expressed support.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st Substitute HB 152 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

UNASSD