

One Hundred Second Legislature - First Session - 2011

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB591

Chairperson: Senator Kathy Campbell

Committee: Health and Human Services

Date of Hearing: February 24, 2011

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 591 authorizes the use of the Nebraska Statewide Immunization Registry to share and exchange immunization information with health care professionals, schools (including postsecondary educational institutions), licensed childcare facilities, electronic health record systems, public health departments, health departments of other states, and Indian health services and tribes in order to protect Nebraskans from vaccine preventable diseases and to facilitate age-appropriate immunizations.

This bill will:

- Enhance communication between medical facilities (hospitals, pharmacies, physician offices, school health offices, etc.)
- Improve patient safety and quality of care
- Provide easier access and retrieval of immunization data
- Provide more accurate assessments of immunization needs (from individual to state level)
- Improve the quality of data within the system
- Enhance vaccine preventable disease surveillance and prevention

Secondly, this bill supports the state's efforts to advance the use of electronic health records in the analysis of medical data to detect or anticipate disease outbreaks. This analysis, called syndromic surveillance, is widely acknowledged as beneficial to public health.

- Currently, syndromic surveillance is conducted on a limited basis. While some facilities currently participate voluntarily other facilities are unwilling to participate in the absence of statutes and regulations authorizing such activity.
- Current syndromic surveillance activities are done by phone calls and faxes, yielding data that is a week old, or more, when compiled. With more facilities participating in syndromic surveillance electronically, health information would be provided in real-time, giving disease experts increased ability to catch an outbreak as it is happening.
- The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) also sees the opportunity to enhance disease monitoring by helping eligible providers and facilities develop electronic interfaces with DHHS computer systems.
- Use of electronic health information for these purposes is compliant with the confidentiality provisions of the federal HIPPA Act.

This bill would enhance DHHS' ability to:

- Quickly identify or rule out public health threats, conditions of public health importance, or suspected incidents.
- Support public health investigations and recommend courses of action.
- Obtain data to inform the public and stakeholder organizations about conditions of public health importance.
- Support health data providers, media, first responders, and government decision makers.
- Prepare for federal "meaningful use" expectations.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Mike Gloor