

HCS HB 507 -- VACCINATIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

SPONSOR: Holand (Hubbard)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 13 to 0.

This substitute requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to offer a vaccination program for first responders who may be exposed to infectious diseases when deployed to disaster locations as a result of a bioterrorism event or a suspected bioterrorism event.

The substitute sets forth the vaccinations that must be offered to first responders. Participation in the vaccination program is voluntary for some first responders, except responders identified by their employers who cannot safely perform their emergency responsibilities without the vaccination. The substitute requires the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control to be followed when screening first responders for contraindications to the vaccination. First responders will be exempt from vaccinations when medically contraindicated.

The department must give priority to first responders and persons exposed to biological agents if there is a shortage of a vaccine. Educational material regarding ways to prevent exposure must also be provided to first responders. The department may contract with other entities for the administration of vaccinations. The program will become effective upon receipt of federal funds.

The substitute contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: Not available at time of printing.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill protects the public health of Missourians by establishing a voluntary vaccination program for first responders and other persons who may be exposed to biological agents. The bill allows a medical exemption for first responders who have a documented contraindication to the vaccination.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hubbard; and Missouri State Troopers Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the State of Missouri or the federal government should not have the authority to mandate vaccinations which could have various side effects. The bill preempts the health care decision-making authority of individuals concerning vaccinations.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri First.

Others testifying on the bill was Department of Health and Senior Services.

Joseph Deering, Legislative Analyst