

HCS HB 1226 -- VACCINATIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

SPONSOR: Shoemaker, 8 (Hubbard)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs by a vote of 18 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 lists the vaccinations that must be offered to first responders. Participation in the vaccination program is voluntary. The substitute requires the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be followed when screening first responders for contraindications to the vaccination.

The department, in consultation with the Governor and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 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.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that current federal law concerning first responders and bioterrorism only addresses biological attacks resulting from the release of anthrax. The bill will expand the federal law by creating a vaccination program for first responders who are exposed to various biological agents that can be used in a bioterrorist attack and provide parameters to implement a vaccination program for first responders in Missouri.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hubbard; Department of Health and Senior Services; and Missouri State Council of Firefighters.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Joseph Deering, Legislative Analyst