

HB 413 -- BIOTERRORISM VACCINATION PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Hubbard

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Special Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to offer a vaccination program for first responders who may be exposed to infectious diseases as a result of bioterrorism. At a minimum, the program must include vaccinations for smallpox, anthrax, and other vaccinations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Participation in the vaccination program is voluntary, except for first responders identified by their employers as personnel who cannot safely perform their emergency responsibilities without the vaccination. The bill requires that the recommendations of the advisory committee 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 bill contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say it is important that first responders are among the first people to receive vaccination because they are on the front line and the first to be exposed to infectious diseases when a disaster occurs.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Hubbard and Wildberger; and Professional Firefighters of Eastern Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Robert Triplett, Legislative Analyst