

# Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of HB 1864

## Transporting patients by ambulance to facilities other than emergency departments (2025 Legislative Session)

Evidence indicates that HB 1864 would likely result in Department of Health (DOH) conducting rulemaking; some regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) & Trauma Care (TC) councils adopting ambulance transport procedures for facilities other than emergency departments (EDs) into regional EMS-TC Patient Care Procedures; and some medical program directors and local EMS-TC councils developing a county operating procedure, writing a patient care protocol, and identifying facilities to accept referrals; which may result in some patients being transferred to facilities other than EDs. It is not well researched how provisions may impact health outcomes.

### BILL INFORMATION

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**Sponsors:** Thomas, Griffey, Doglio, Parshley, Rule, Fosse, Timmons, Farivar, Reed, Springer, Ramel, Nance, Cortes, Simmons, Peterson, Macri, Street, Salahuddin, Obras, Pollet, Zahn, Hill

#### Summary of Bill:

- Updates [RCW 18.73.280](#) to allow an ambulance service to transport patients to a facility other than an emergency department (ED), such as an urgent care clinic, a mental health facility, or a substance use disorder program, as authorized in regional emergency medical services (EMS) and trauma care (TC) plans under [RCW 70.168.100](#).
- Requires a health carrier offering a health plan issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2026, to provide coverage for ground ambulance transport to a facility other than an ED, such as an urgent care clinic.
- Directs Health Care Authority (HCA) to update reimbursement methodology for ambulance services when transporting a person enrolled in Apple Health (Medicaid) to include transport to a facility other than an ED.
- Updates the definition of “patient care procedures” in [Chapter 70.168 RCW](#) (Statewide Trauma Care System) to include a substance use disorder program or other nonemergency department facility, such as an urgent care clinic.
- Reenacts and amends [RCW 18.71.210](#) to include transport of patients to facilities other than EDs, such as urgent care clinics and substance use disorder programs.

### HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

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#### Summary of Findings:

This Health Impact Review found the following evidence for provisions in HB 1864:

- **Informed assumption** that allowing an ambulance service to transport patients to a facility other than an ED, as authorized in RCW 70.168.100, would likely result in the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) conducting rulemaking to enable ambulance services to transport patients to facilities other than EDs. This informed assumption is based on the

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implementation of previous changes to state law, other DOH guidance, and information from key informants.

- **Informed assumption** that DOH conducting rulemaking to enable ambulance services to transport patients to facilities other than EDs would likely result in some regional EMS-TC councils adopting ambulance transport procedures for facilities other than EDs into regional EMS-TC Patient Care Procedures (PCPs). This informed assumption is based on previous DOH guidance, a review of regional EMS-TC councils' Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2025 Strategic Plans and PCPs, and information from key informants.
- **Informed assumption** that some regional EMS-TC councils adopting ambulance transport procedures for facilities other than EDs into regional EMS-TC PCPs would likely result in some medical program directors (MPDs) and local EMS-TC councils developing a county operating procedure (COP), writing a patient care protocol (protocol), and identifying facilities other than EDs to accept referrals. This informed assumption is based on implementation of previous transport procedures, information from key informants, and information from published literature.
- **A fair amount of evidence** that some MPDs and local EMS-TC councils developing a COP, writing a protocol, and identifying facilities other than EDs to accept referrals may result in transport of some patients to facilities other than EDs.
- **Not well researched** how transport of some patients to facilities other than EDs may impact health outcomes.

**Additional Considerations** includes discussion of reimbursement for ambulance services and costs for patients.

## FULL REVIEW

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For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full Health Impact Review at

<https://sboh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/HIR-2025-04-HB1864.pdf>

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