

and shall be transferred to the county's current expense fund or to the fiscal agent of the combined city-county health department.

Passed the House January 31, 1984.

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CHAPTER 26

[Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 791]

COUNTY HOSPITALS

AN ACT Relating to county hospitals; amending section 36.62.010, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.010; amending section 36.62.040, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.040; amending section 36.62.050, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.050; amending section 36.62.060, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.060; amending section 36.62.070, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as last amended by section 72, chapter 167, Laws of 1983 and RCW 36.62.070; amending section 36.62.090, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 37, chapter 195, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.090; amending section 36.62.100, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.100; amending section 36.62.110, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 2, chapter 36, Laws of 1967 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.110; amending section 36.62.120, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.120; amending section 36.62.130, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.130; amending section 36.62.140, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.140; amending section 36.62.150, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.150; amending section 36.62.160, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.160; amending section 36.62.170, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.170; amending section 36.62.180, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.180; amending section 36.62.190, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.190; amending section 36.62.200, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 1, chapter 17, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.200; amending section 36.62.210, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.210; amending section 36.62.230, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.230; amending section 36.62.252, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as last amended by section 1, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.252; amending section 36.62.270, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 2, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.270; amending section 1, chapter 36, Laws of 1967 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.290; repealing section 36.62.020, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.020; repealing section 36.62.220, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.220; repealing section 36.62.240, chapter 4, Laws of 1963, section 44, chapter 141, Laws of 1979 and RCW 36.62.240; and repealing section 3, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.281.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Sec. 1. Section 36.62.010, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.010 are each amended to read as follows:

The (~~board of county commissioners~~) legislative authority of any county may establish, provide, and maintain hospitals for the care and treatment of the indigent, sick, injured, (~~and maternity cases~~) or infirm, and for this purpose the (~~board~~) county legislative authority may:

(1) Purchase or lease real property (~~therefor~~) or use (~~for this purpose~~) lands already owned by the county (~~providing such site is first approved by the state board of health~~);

(2) Erect all necessary buildings, make all necessary improvements and repairs and alter any existing building for the use of said hospitals;

(3) Use county moneys, levy taxes, and issue bonds as authorized by law, to raise a sufficient amount of money to cover the cost of procuring the site, constructing and operating hospitals, and for the maintenance thereof and all other necessary and proper expenses; and

(4) ~~((Appoint a board of trustees for said hospital;~~

~~(5)))~~ Accept and hold in trust for the county any grant of land, gift or bequest of money, or any donation for the benefit of the purposes of this chapter, and apply the same in accordance with the terms of the gift((;

~~(6) Authorize said hospital to be a member of and maintain membership in any local, state, or national group or association organized and operated for the promotion of the public health and welfare or the advancement of the efficiency of hospital administration and in connection therewith to use tax funds for the payment of dues and fees.~~

~~For the purposes of this chapter the word "hospital" shall include almshouses)).~~

Sec. 2. Section 36.62.040, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.040 are each amended to read as follows:

All contracts made in pursuance hereof shall be for such period of time and upon such terms and conditions as shall be agreed upon. The contract shall fully set forth the amount of money to be contributed by the county and city towards the acquisition of such site and the improvement thereof and the manner in which the property shall be improved and the character of the building or buildings to be erected thereon. It may provide for the amount of money to be contributed annually by the county and city for the upkeep and maintenance of the property and the building or buildings thereon, or it may provide for the relative proportion of such expense, which the county and city shall annually pay. The contract may specify the parts of such building or buildings which shall be set apart for the exclusive use and occupation of the county and city. The money to be contributed by the county or city may be raised by a sale of bonds of such county or city or by general taxation. Any such county or city now possessing funds or having funds available for a county or city hospital from a sale of bonds or otherwise may contract for the expenditure of such funds, as herein provided. Such contract shall be made only after a proper resolution or ordinance of the ~~((board of county commissioners of the county))~~ county legislative authority and ordinance of the city have been passed specifically authorizing it. The contract when made shall be binding upon the county and city during its existence or until it is modified or abrogated by mutual consent evidenced by ~~((a proper resolution and ordinance))~~ appropriate legislation. A site with or without buildings may be contributed in lieu of money at a valuation to be agreed upon.

Sec. 3. Section 36.62.050, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.050 are each amended to read as follows:

When it is proposed to establish such hospital, a petition shall be presented to the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority, signed by three hundred or more resident taxpayers of the county, requesting the ~~((board))~~ county legislative authority to submit to the electors the proposition to issue bonds for the purpose of procuring a site, and erecting, equipping, and maintaining such hospital, and specifying the amount of bonds proposed to be issued for that purpose and the number of hospital beds ~~((; which number shall not exceed one bed for each thousand population in counties of more than fifty thousand population))~~.

Sec. 4. Section 36.62.060, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.060 are each amended to read as follows:

Upon presentation of the petition, the ~~((board of county commissioners, by order unanimously adopted;))~~ county legislative authority may submit to the voters of the county at the next general election the question of issuing bonds and levying a tax for such hospital.

Sec. 5. Section 36.62.070, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as last amended by section 72, chapter 167, Laws of 1983 and RCW 36.62.070 are each amended to read as follows:

~~((1) Should a majority of all the votes cast upon the proposition be in favor of establishing the hospital, the county legislative authority shall proceed to issue bonds of the county not to exceed the amount specified in the proposition, in denominations of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars, bearing interest at a rate or rates as authorized by the county legislative authority, and payable annually or semiannually;))~~ The bonds issued for such hospital shall ~~((be serial bonds with))~~ not have maturities ~~((not))~~ in excess of twenty years. ~~((Such bonds may be in any form, including bearer bonds or registered bonds as provided in RCW 39.46.030.~~

~~((2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section;))~~ Such bonds ~~((may))~~ shall be issued and sold in accordance with chapter 39.46 RCW.

Sec. 6. Section 36.62.090, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 37, chapter 195, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.090 are each amended to read as follows:

If the hospital is established, the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority, at the time of levying general taxes, ~~((staff))~~ may levy a tax ~~((at the rate voted))~~, not to exceed fifty cents per thousand dollars of assessed value in any one year, for the maintenance of the hospital.

Sec. 7. Section 36.62.100, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.100 are each amended to read as follows:

Patients shall be admitted to such hospitals in accordance with ~~((rules))~~ policies to be ~~((established))~~ proposed by the board of ~~((county~~

~~commissioners, but such rules))~~ trustees and approved by the county legislative authority. The policies shall provide, within the resources available to the hospital, that ((preference in the)) admission of patients shall ((be given to those unable to pay for their care in private institutions)) not be dependent upon their ability to pay. Whenever a patient has been admitted to the hospital ~~((from the county in which the hospital is situated, the superintendent shall cause inquiry to be made as to his circumstances, and of the relatives legally liable for his support. If he finds that the patient or the relatives legally liable for his support, are able to pay for his treatment in whole or in part, an order shall be made directing the patient, or his relatives, to pay to the county treasurer for his support, a specified sum per week, in proportion to their financial ability, but such sum shall not exceed that charged by private hospitals of similar size in the county for service of like character. The county commissioners may collect such sum from the patient or his estate, or from his relatives legally liable for his support. If the superintendent finds that the patient, or his relatives, are not able to pay, either in whole or in part, for his care and treatment in such hospital, he shall be admitted free of charge))~~ and in accordance with rules established by the board of trustees, the hospital may determine the person's ability to pay for the care provided by the hospital, render billings for the care, and take necessary steps to obtain payment for the costs of the care from the person, from the person's estate, or from any persons or organizations legally liable for the person's support.

Sec. 8. Section 36.62.110, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 2, chapter 36, Laws of 1967 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.110 are each amended to read as follows:

Whenever any county, or any county and city jointly, or two or more counties jointly, establish a hospital ~~((of two hundred or more beds,))~~ for the care and treatment of the indigent, sick, injured, or infirm, under the provisions of this chapter, and such hospital is completed and ready for operation, the ((board of county commissioners)) county legislative authority of the county in which the institution is located shall appoint ((as trustees for the institution six secular)) thirteen persons((, two to be from each county commissioner district, nominated by the county commissioner elected from each such district. The six)) as trustees for the institution. The thirteen trustees, together with the additional trustees required by RCW 36.62.130, if any, ~~((and the general superintendent, if any,))~~ shall constitute a board of trustees for such hospital.

Sec. 9. Section 36.62.120, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.120 are each amended to read as follows:

The first members of the board of trustees of such institution shall be appointed by the ~~((board of county commissioners within thirty days after March 23, 1931 in any county having such a hospital or institution, and~~

thereafter)) county legislative authority within thirty days after the institution has been completed and is ready for operation. ((The members of the board of trustees first appointed shall be appointed for the respective terms of one, two, three, four, five, and six years from and after the fifteenth day of January following their appointment, and until their successors are appointed and qualified, and thereafter their successors shall be appointed for terms of six years and until their successors are appointed and qualified. If the board of county commissioners is unable to determine by unanimous vote the terms of the first appointees, such terms shall be determined by lot.)) The county legislative authority appointing the initial members shall appoint three members for one-year terms, three members for two-year terms, three members for three-year terms, and four members for four-year terms, and until their successors are appointed and qualified, and thereafter their successors shall be appointed for terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified: PROVIDED, That the continuation of a member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial trustees shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August following the appointment but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August following the appointment.

For an institution which is already in existence on the effective date of this 1984 act, the county legislative authority shall appoint within thirty days of the effective date of this 1984 act three additional members for one-year terms, two additional members for two-year terms, and two additional members for three-year terms, and until their successors are appointed and qualified, and thereafter their successors shall be appointed for terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the continuation of an additional member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial additional members shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August of the year of appointment but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August of the year of the appointment.

Upon expiration of the terms of current members, the successors to current members shall be appointed for four-year terms and until their successors are appointed and qualified: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the continuation of a successor to a current member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial successors to current members shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August following the expiration of a current term but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August of the year of the appointment.

Sec. 10. Section 36.62.130, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.130 are each amended to read as follows:

In case two or more counties establish a hospital jointly, the ~~((six))~~ thirteen members of the board of trustees shall be chosen as provided from the county in which the institution is located and each ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority of the other county or counties which contributed to the establishment of the hospital shall appoint two additional members of the board of trustees. The regular term of each of the two additional members shall be ~~((six))~~ four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified. Such additional members shall be residents of the respective counties from which they are appointed and shall otherwise possess the same qualifications as other trustees. The first term of office of the persons first appointed as additional members shall be fixed by the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority of the county in which said hospital or institution is located, but shall not be for more than ~~((six))~~ four years.

Sec. 11. Section 36.62.140, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.140 are each amended to read as follows:

No person shall be eligible for appointment as a trustee ~~((unless he is at least thirty-five years of age and has been a resident of the county commissioner district from which he is appointed, or in the case of additional trustees, of the county he represents, for a period of at least two years immediately prior to his appointment. No trustee shall be actively engaged in the healing or nursing arts, and no person, except an ex officio member, shall be eligible for appointment as a trustee who is a clergyman of any denomination or))~~ who holds or has held ~~((any office with pay))~~ during the period of two years immediately prior to ~~((his))~~ appointment any salaried office or position in any office, department, or branch of the ~~((county, township, or city or town governments of the county from which the appointment is to be made))~~ government which established or maintained the hospital.

Sec. 12. Section 36.62.150, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.150 are each amended to read as follows:

The ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority which appointed a member of the board of trustees ~~((may by unanimous vote remove him for misconduct or neglect of duty, but no such removal shall be made unless the board serves written notice upon him, setting forth specifically the charges of misconduct or neglect of duty and fixing a time and place for hearing thereon at which the trustee charged shall be given full opportunity to be present, meet the charges and be heard in his own defense. Any trustee so removed may appeal from the order of removal to the superior court of the county of the removing board of county commissioners within the time and in the manner provided in RCW 36.32.330, and thereupon such board of county commissioners shall certify to the court the~~

~~causes upon which the order of removal was based, together with all records and files in the office of the board pertaining to the matter of removal. The court shall hear the matter de novo and enter an order affirming, or setting aside, the order of removal. If the court sets aside the order of removal, it shall give appellant judgment against the county for his costs and disbursements, including a reasonable attorney's fee))~~ may remove the member for cause and in the manner provided in this section. Notice shall be provided by the county appointing authority to the trustee and the board of trustees generally. The notice shall set forth reasons which justify removal. The trustee shall be provided opportunity for a hearing before the county appointing authority: PROVIDED, That three consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings of the board of trustees shall be deemed cause for removal of a trustee without hearing. Any trustee removed for a cause other than three consecutive unexcused absences may appeal the removal within twenty days of the order of removal by seeking a writ of review before the superior court pursuant to chapter 7.16 RCW. Removal shall disqualify the trustee from subsequent reappointment.

Sec. 13. Section 36.62.160, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.160 are each amended to read as follows:

Any vacancy in the board of trustees (~~except that of an ex officio member~~) shall be filled by appointment by the (~~board~~) county legislative authority making the original appointment, and such appointee shall hold office for the remainder of the term of the trustee (~~in whose stead he is appointed~~) replaced.

Sec. 14. Section 36.62.170, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.170 are each amended to read as follows:

~~((Within ten days after their appointment, the appointees shall qualify by taking the oath of office required of county officers and shall meet and organize. The board of trustees shall elect from among its members a president and vice president. The board of trustees shall meet upon the call of the president, or upon call signed by three members of the board and served upon all members. The call shall fix the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Any meeting may be adjourned from time to time.))~~ A majority of the trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Sec. 15. Section 36.62.180, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.180 are each amended to read as follows:

The board of trustees shall:

(1) Have general supervision and care of such hospitals and institutions and the buildings and grounds thereof and power to do everything necessary to the proper maintenance and operation thereof within the limits of approved budgets and the appropriations authorized;

(2) Elect from among its members a president and vice president;

(3) Adopt bylaws and rules for its own guidance and for the government of the hospital;

(4) Prepare annually a budget covering both hospital operations and capital projects, in accordance with the provisions of ((the county budget)) applicable law, and file such budgets with the county ((auditor)) treasurer or if the hospital has been established by more than one county, with the county ((auditor)) treasurer of each county, and if a city has contributed to the establishment of the hospital, with the official of the city charged by law with the preparation of the city budget((; a detailed and itemized estimate; both of probable revenues from sources other than taxation and of all expenditures required from such county, counties, and city, as the case may be, by the hospital or institution for the ensuing fiscal year)); and

((3)) (5) File ((during the first week in January of each year)) with the ((board of county commissioners)) legislative authority of each county and ((the)) city ((council or governing body of any city)) contributing to the establishment of such hospital, at a time to be determined by the county legislative authority of the county in which the hospital is located, a report covering the proceedings of the board with reference to the hospital((; and a statement of all receipts and expenditures during the preceding calendar year)) during the preceding twelve months and an annual financial report and statement.

Sec. 16. Section 36.62.190, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.190 are each amended to read as follows:

The board of trustees may((:

~~(1) Adopt bylaws and rules for its own guidance and for the government of the hospital or institution;~~

~~(2) Establish and maintain in connection with the hospital or institution a training school for nurses;~~

~~(3) Establish as a department in connection with the hospital or institution a suitable building for the isolation and detention of persons afflicted with contagious diseases subject to quarantine;~~

~~(4) Determine whether or not, and if so upon what terms, it will extend the privilege of the hospital or institution to nonresidents of the county or counties establishing the same;~~

~~(5) Operate the hospital or institution as a general hospital and provide as a department thereof suitable accommodations and means for the care of persons afflicted with tuberculosis;~~

~~(6) Formulate rules and regulations for the government of tuberculosis patients and for the protection of other patients, nurses, and attendants from infection;~~

(7)) accept property by gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise for the use of such institution, except that acceptance of any interest in real property shall be by prior authorization by the county.

Sec. 17. Section 36.62.200, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 1, chapter 17, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.200 are each amended to read as follows:

No trustee(~~(; except the ex officio member,)~~) shall receive any compensation or emolument whatever for services as trustee; nor shall any trustee have or acquire any personal interest in any lease or contract whatsoever, made by the county or board of trustees with respect to such hospital or institution: PROVIDED, That each member of a board of trustees of a county hospital may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended: PROVIDED FURTHER, That, in addition, trustees of a county hospital shall be reimbursed for travel expenses for traveling from their home to a trustee meeting at a rate provided for in RCW 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended.

Sec. 18. Section 36.62.210, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.210 are each amended to read as follows:

~~((The board of trustees shall employ and fix the salary of a general superintendent, who shall furnish a bond in such amount as may be fixed by the board and which shall be subject to approval of the board. The general superintendent shall become an ex officio member and secretary of the board of trustees, and shall devote his entire time exclusively to the management of the hospital and institution and shall not engage in any other business or profession of any nature whatsoever. After January 1, 1947, the general superintendent shall not be qualified for appointment unless he has not less than three years of experience as superintendent, or assistant superintendent, of a general hospital.))~~ The board of trustees shall appoint a superintendent who shall be appointed for an indefinite time and be removable at the will of the board of trustees. Appointments and removals shall be by resolution, introduced at a regular meeting and adopted at a subsequent regular meeting by a majority vote. The superintendent shall receive such salary as the board of trustees shall fix by resolution.

Sec. 19. Section 36.62.230, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62-.230 are each amended to read as follows:

The ~~((general))~~ superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the hospital or institution and shall perform all administrative services necessary to the efficient and economical conduct of the hospital or institution and the admission and proper care of persons properly entitled to the services thereof as provided by law or by the rules and regulations of the board of trustees.

Sec. 20. Section 36.62.252, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as last amended by section 1, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.252 are each amended to read as follows:

Every county which maintains a county hospital or infirmary shall establish a "county hospital fund" into which fund shall be deposited all unrestricted moneys received from any source for hospital or infirmary services including money received for services to recipients of public assistance and other persons without income and resources sufficient to secure such services. The county may maintain other funds for restricted moneys. Obligations incurred ~~(,from such hospitalization and infirmary care)~~ by the hospital shall be paid from ~~((the))~~ such funds by the county treasurer in the same manner as general county obligations are paid. The county ~~((auditor))~~ treasurer shall furnish to the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority a monthly report of receipts and disbursements in the county hospital funds which report shall also show the balance of cash on hand.

Sec. 21. Section 36.62.270, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 2, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.270 are each amended to read as follows:

In the event that additional funds are needed for the operation of a county hospital or infirmary, the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority shall have authority to adopt a supplemental budget. Such supplemental budget shall set forth the amount and sources of funds and the items of expenditure involved. ~~((In the adoption of a supplemental budget the board of county commissioners shall follow the same procedure as required under the provisions of RCW 36.40.180.))~~

Sec. 22. Section 1, chapter 36, Laws of 1967 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.290 are each amended to read as follows:

Whenever any county, or any county and city jointly, or two or more counties jointly, establish a hospital ~~((of two hundred or more beds,))~~ under the provisions of this chapter, the board of trustees of the hospital is empowered, with the approval of the ~~((board of county commissioners))~~ county legislative authority, to enter into a contract with the board of regents of a state university to provide hospital services, including management under the direction of a hospital administrator for the hospital, to provide for the rendering of medical services in connection with the hospital and to provide for the conduct of teaching and research activities by the university in connection with the hospital. Any such board of regents is empowered to enter into such a contract, to provide such hospital services, and to provide for the rendition of such medical services and for the carrying on of teaching and research in connection with such a hospital. If such a contract is entered into, the provisions of RCW ~~((sections))~~ 36.62.210~~((,-36.62.220))~~ and 36.62.230 shall not be applicable during the term of the contract and all of the powers, duties and functions vested in the superintendent ~~((or the general superintendent))~~ in this chapter ~~((36.62 RCW))~~ shall be vested in the board of trustees. The board of trustees shall provide for such conditions and controls in the contract as it shall deem to be in the community interest.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 23. The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

- (1) Section 36.62.020, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.020;
- (2) Section 36.62.220, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.62.220;
- (3) Section 36.62.240, chapter 4, Laws of 1963, section 44, chapter 141, Laws of 1979 and RCW 36.62.240; and
- (4) Section 3, chapter 277, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 36.62.281.

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CHAPTER 27

[Substitute House Bill No. 1101]

ABSENTEE BALLOTS—HOSPITAL PATIENTS

AN ACT Relating to absentee voting; amending section 29.36.010, chapter 9, Laws of 1965 as last amended by section 76, chapter 361, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. and RCW 29.36.010; and amending section 29.36.035, chapter 9, Laws of 1965 and RCW 29.36.035.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Sec. 1. Section 29.36.010, chapter 9, Laws of 1965 as last amended by section 76, chapter 361, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. and RCW 29.36.010 are each amended to read as follows:

~~((In addition to those persons authorized under section 19 of this 1977 amendatory act,))~~ Any duly registered voter may vote an absentee ballot for any primary or election in the manner provided in this chapter.

A voter desiring to cast an absentee ballot must apply in writing to his county auditor no earlier than forty-five days nor later than the day prior to any election or primary: PROVIDED, That an application honored for a primary ballot shall also be honored as an application for a ballot for the following election if the voter so indicates on his application: PROVIDED FURTHER, That a voter admitted to a hospital no earlier than five days before a primary or election and confined to the hospital on election day may apply by messenger for an absentee ballot on the day of the primary or election if a signed statement from the hospital administrator, or designee, verifying the voter's date of admission and status as a patient in the hospital on the day of the primary or election is attached to the absentee ballot application.

Such applications must contain the voter's signature and may be made in person or by mail or messenger: PROVIDED, That no application for an absentee ballot shall be approved unless the voter's signature upon the application compares favorably with the voter's signature upon his permanent registration record.