

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5913

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to online access to the University of Washington health sciences library by certain health care providers.

Brief Description: Concerning online access to the University of Washington health sciences library by certain health care providers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Keiser and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/24/09, 3/26/09 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Limits a health care professional's license surcharge for online access to the University of Washington Health Sciences Library to only one annual surcharge, regardless of the number of professional licenses the person holds.
- Requires the Department of Health and the University of Washington to provide an annual accounting of the use of the license surcharge.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Driscoll, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell and Pedersen.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103)

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

By law, the Department of Health (DOH) must charge fees to professionals licensed by the DOH. The fees must be based on the cost to the agency for the licensure of the activity or class of activities.

In 2007 several surcharges were added to the license fees of certain health care practitioners and related professions. One of these surcharges was a fee of up to \$25 for transfer to the University of Washington to provide online access to selected clinical resources through the Health Sciences Library. Beginning January 1, 2009, these licensees were given access to vital clinical resources, medical journals, decision-support tools, and evidence-based reviews of procedures, drugs, and devices.

The online access fee is charged to the license fee of physicians and osteopathic physicians, physician assistants, naturopaths, podiatrists, chiropractors, psychologists, registered nurses, optometrists, mental health counselors, clinical social workers, and acupuncturists.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Each person subject to the surcharge for online access to the University of Washington Health Sciences Library is required to pay only one surcharge of up to \$25 annually, regardless of the number of professional licenses the person holds.

Both the DOH and the University of Washington must provide an annual accounting of the use of the funds transferred for the online access program. The accounting must include the amounts paid by each of the professions subject to the surcharge and which categories of professionals are using the materials available under the program. The accounting must be transmitted by e-mail to the legislative health care committees by December 1 each year.

The DOH must convene a user work group annually to review the online access program and make recommendations for improvements.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill: (1) adds that the DOH must also provide an accounting of the use of the funds paid under the online access program, and that both the DOH and the University of Washington must provide the accounting to the legislative health care committees by December 1 each year; (2) requires the DOH to convene a user advisory group to review the online access program and make recommendations for improving the program; and (3) makes various technical changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 23, 2009.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Online access to the University of Washington Health Sciences Library is exciting, but the surcharge being charged for this access is surprisingly high. The surcharge is set at its maximum for many professions and not all professions are being charged the same amount. There needs to be more accountability so the health care practitioners subject to the surcharge know where the money is going and whether there is the possibility of lowering the surcharge in the future.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Lori Bielinski, Washington State Chiropractic Association; and Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association – Washington Chapter, Washington Osteopathic Medical Association, and Washington State Podiatric Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.