

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2540

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 17, 2010

Title: An act relating to repealing the expiration date for provisions relating to the licensure of dentists from other states.

Brief Description: Concerning the practice of dentistry.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Pedersen, Nelson, Kenney and Morrell.

Brief History: Passed House: 1/28/10, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/17/10 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Marr and Parlette.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: In 2008 the Washington State Legislature passed SHB 2881, relating to the practice of dentistry. This bill revised licensing qualifications for dentists by adding an option to allow a dentist to qualify for licensure if the dentist had practiced in another state for at least four years and completed a one-year postdoctoral residency program approved by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (the commission). The bill also required the commission to report to the Governor and Legislature with recommendations for appropriate standards for issuing a license to foreign-trained dentists. The law expires July 1, 2010.

The commission gathered and reviewed data about foreign-trained dentists licensed in Washington State, other state licensing standards, and unmet dental care needs. The commission considered several options to reduce barriers to licensure and issued a report with a recommendation. The first option was to accept foreign-trained dentists who have been licensed in another U.S. state for at least five years and obtain two years preceptorship (in a community clinic or private office) in Washington. A second option required foreign-trained dentists to practice in community clinics for a period of time. The third option permitted a dentist to practice in Washington State if they have practiced in another state for at least four years and completed a one-year postdoctoral residency approved by the

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commission. The commission concluded that this last option was the best, and that it would ensure qualified dentists are providing appropriate care and ensuring patient safety.

Summary of Bill: The licensing standards created in SHB 2881 (which expire July 1, 2010) will continue. Dentists who have practiced in another state for at least four years and completed a one-year postdoctoral residency approved by the commission will be permitted to practice dentistry in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: By allowing the alternate option to continue, we will attract more dentists to Washington. Others should be permitted to use this path to practice dentistry. If this bill isn't passed, this option will expire in a few months.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Katherine Palm-Cruz, citizen.