

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2611

As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

Title: An act relating to encouraging training for medical students, nurses, and medical technicians and assistants to work with adult patients with developmental disabilities.

Brief Description: Requiring the student achievement council to develop a grant program to encourage training for students studying in the medical field to work with individuals with disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Appleton, Ross, Chandler, Gregerson, Bergquist, Kagi, Pollet and Freeman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/31/14, 2/4/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), subject to appropriation of funds for this purpose, to develop a grant program for training projects that focus on improving services to individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Provides that the WSAC may administer the grant program in consultation with the Department of Health.
- Requires a report to the Legislature regarding grants awarded and progress in related areas.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Hansen, Hargrove, Johnson, Magendanz, Muri, Reykdal, Sawyer, Scott, Smith, Tarleton, Walkinshaw, Walsh and Wylie.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

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.

Background:

Some research has indicated that people with developmental disabilities have greater difficulty accessing health care that meets their unique needs. A report of the National Council on Disability finds that the absence of professional training on disability competency issues for health care practitioners is one of the most significant barriers that prevent people with disabilities from receiving appropriate and effective health care and disability competency is not a core curriculum requirement for professional health care training programs.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the state's student financial aid programs and provides strategic planning, conducts research, and policy analysis for higher education in Washington.

Summary of Bill:

It is recognized that students in various health care fields at public and private institutions of higher education and technical schools throughout the state would benefit from specialized training and exposure to the unique care needs of adults with developmental disabilities.

Subject to the appropriation of funds for the purpose, the WSAC shall develop a centralized grant program for institutions to develop training projects aimed at improving the provision of medical services to adult individuals with developmental disabilities. The WSAC may administer the grant program in consultation with the Department of Health. By December 1, 2015, the WSAC must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature regarding grants awarded. The WSAC must also report on any other efforts or progress in expanding or improving training with respect to the provision of medical services to adult individuals with developmental disabilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The proposal would help to expand specialized training projects for health professionals to improve healthcare services to people with disabilities. It is a problem when dentists and other people in the medical and health fields are not trained to work with the developmentally disabled. The measure directs the WSAC to develop a grant program that would improve health services to this population. A top priority is that the state takes care of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

(Information only) This program would require some additional resources to administer.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; and Rick Jensen, Action for the Developmentally Disabled.

(Information only) Randy Spaulding, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.