

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5892

As of January 24, 2022

Title: An act relating to establishing pilot projects for utilizing high school student nursing assistant-certified programs to address the nursing workforce shortage and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals.

Brief Description: Establishing pilot projects for utilizing high school student nursing assistant-certified programs to address the nursing workforce shortage and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Conway, Honeyford, King, Lovick, Short, Van De Wege, Warnick, Wellman, Wilson, C., Wilson, J. and Wilson, L..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 1/24/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes pilot projects to address the nursing workforce shortage and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals by using high school student certified nursing assistant (CNA) programs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: Julie Tran (786-7283)

Background: The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Nursing Commission) regulates the nursing profession in Washington and establishes, monitors, and enforces licensing, standards of practice, and discipline.

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) are people who assist in the delivery of nursing and nursing-related activities to patients in a health care facility. CNAs work under the direction and supervision of licensed registered nurses or licensed practical nurses.

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

To become a CNA, an individual must complete necessary training and pass the written and skills exams. The CNA training program must be a minimum of 85 hours total, with a minimum of 35 hours of classroom training and a minimum of 50 hours of clinical training. These training programs are offered in a variety of settings across the states including high schools, nursing homes, and technical colleges. There are 28 high schools offering CNA programs in Washington State.

Applicants may be eligible to take the CNA exam without taking a CNA class if the applicant:

- has completed appropriate military training;
- is enrolled in a nursing program; or
- was educated as a nurse outside of the United States.

Summary of Bill: The Nursing Commission, in collaboration with rural hospitals, CNA certified training programs, and the Department of Labor and Industries, must create at least two pilot projects for rural hospitals to help address workforce shortages and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals. The pilot project must have at least one participating rural hospital on the east and west side of the Cascade mountains.

The pilot projects must:

- use high school students who are training to become CNAs or high school students who are CNAs; and
- prioritize using the CNA high school students to their full scope of practice and identify any barriers to doing this.

The Nursing Commission must submit an annual report beginning December 1, 2023 relating to the pilot projects' status and any findings and recommendations to the Legislature's health care committees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington is facing a healthcare workforce shortage that is even more acute when you look at the rural communities. This is an opportunity to create a pipeline. Nursing assistants provide a critical role to care delivery and is a pathway for those wishing to further their healthcare career. Nothing in the nursing regulations will restrict this pilot project and the Department of Health oversees the certification process. Department of Labor and Industries does have some limitations for

individuals under the age of 18 but there is a waiver process for that. There is a request for consultants to provide support for the pilot project and preparation of the report to the Legislature.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Brown, Prime Sponsor; Paula Meyer, Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission; Amy Anderson, Association of Washington Business.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.