

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5448

As Passed House

April 9, 1997

Title: An act relating to the merger of the health professions account and the medical disciplinary account.

Brief Description: Merging the health professions account and the medical disciplinary account.

Sponsors: Senators Deccio, Wojahn, Wood and Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/2/97, 4/3/97 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/9/97, 98-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Lambert; Linville; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7130).

Background: The Department of Health is responsible for licensing new physicians and physician's assistants. The department is also responsible for investigating complaints against members of these two professions. Both activities are funded through fees paid by physicians and physician's assistants.

Both the licensing function and the disciplinary function are administered by the Medical Quality Assurance Commission within the Department of Health. Separate fees are paid into the medical disciplinary and the health professions accounts to support the disciplinary and licensing functions, respectively. The commission utilizes available funding from both accounts to carry out its mission.

Summary of Bill: The Medical Disciplinary Account is eliminated. All funds in the Medical Disciplinary Account are transferred to the Health Professions Account and all fees from the licensing and disciplinary activities must be placed in the Health Professions Account. The separate licensing and disciplinary fees must be merged into one fee, equal to the sum of the two separate fees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: In addition to consolidating the fees, the bill addresses a fiscal problem for the Health Professions Account. The account is out of balance and the program could be put in a position of not being able to operate.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Gary Bennett, Department of Health.