

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5448

As Passed Senate, March 7, 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: Ways & Means: 2/12/97, 2/13/97 [DP].
Passed Senate 3/7/97, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Kohl, Long, Loveland, McDonald, Rossi, Schow, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau and Winsley.

Staff: Susan Lucas (786-7711)

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 for 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 must be paid by physicians and physician's assistants so that the appropriate amounts can be placed in the medical disciplinary account and the health professions account to support the commission's activities. 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 takes effect July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: The license fee for physicians and physician assistants will not change as a result of this bill. The medical association is in favor of this bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ron Weaver, Department of Health.