

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1838

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**

Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to the impaired dentist program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the impaired dentist account.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Schual-Berke, Mulliken and Ogden.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 2/18/99, 2/25/99 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Increases the surcharge on dental licenses from \$15 to \$25 to fund the Impaired Dentist Program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Boldt; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken and Ruderman.

**Staff:** John Welsh (786-7133).

**Background:**

The Dental Quality Assurance Commission administers an Impaired Dentist Program for rehabilitating dentists who are impaired by substance abuse. This program is intended for dentists who volunteer or are required to participate in treatment by the commission as a condition for deferring sanctions imposed by the Uniform Disciplinary Act, such as license revocation or suspension. The program includes intervention in cases of verified impairment, referring impaired dentists to treatment,

monitoring progress, providing prevention and post-treatment support, and contracting with treatment providers.

The Impaired Dentist Program is funded by a surcharge of \$15 on dental license fees, which are placed in the Health Professions Account for implementing the program.

The Impaired Physician Program under contract with the Medical Quality Assurance Commission is a similar program involving not only physicians, but by contract includes the participation of osteopathic physicians, podiatrists, and veterinarians. The program includes treatment of impairments as a result of substance abuse, as well as mental illness, or other debilitating conditions. The dental commission does not currently contract with this impaired physician program to provide treatment services to impaired dentists.

The dental commission desires to contract with the Impaired Physicians Program to provide more complete services to impaired dentists. In order to do this, the surcharge on dental licenses must be increased to \$25.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The surcharge on dental licences for funding the Impaired Dentist Program is increased from \$15 to \$25.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The creation of a new Impaired Dentist Account for funding the program is deleted.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The dental commission desires to contract with the Impaired Physicians Program for treatment services to impaired dentists. In order to do this, the surcharge on dental licenses must be raised to \$25.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Dr. Timothy Wandell, Washington State Dental Association.