

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5037

As of March 8, 2011

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington state board of naturopathy.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state board of naturopathy.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Pflug, Kohl-Welles and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/17/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Naturopathic medicine practice involves diagnosing, treating, and preventing physical disorders by stimulating or supporting the natural processes of the human body. This practice can involve the use of nutrition, physical modalities, homeopathy, and naturopathic medicines. A naturopath must be licensed to practice naturopathy in this state. The Secretary of the Department of Health (Secretary) issues licenses to applicants who successfully complete an approved educational program or its equivalent, pass an exam, possess good moral character, and have not engaged in unprofessional conduct. The Secretary establishes the standards for education programs and alternatives, as well as examination, licensure, and discipline of naturopaths.

The Naturopathic Advisory Committee consists of five members who are appointed by the Secretary and who advise the Secretary in administering the statutes on the practice of naturopathy.

Summary of Bill: A seven member Board of Naturopathy (Board) is created and the Naturopathic Advisory Committee is repealed. Members of the Board are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year terms. Five members of the Board must be licensed naturopaths, and two members must be from the public. The Board, rather than the Secretary, is responsible for adopting rules, setting minimum education and experience requirements, preparing and administering licensing examinations, determining whether alternative methods of training are equivalent to formal education for eligibility to take the exam, and implementing a continuing competency program. The Secretary continues to set license, examination, and renewal fees; issue licenses; maintain a record of applicants and licensees;

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and conduct hearings if a denial of a license is appealed. The Board is provided authority to discipline licensees under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2011.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Costs of the Board will be supported by licensees. This bill brings naturopaths in line with other professions which have boards. The Board will be well funded and is necessary to protect the public.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jennifer Booker, ND; Terry Kohl, Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians.