

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2151

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to department of health responsibility for uniform administrative procedures for credentialing health professionals.

Brief Description: Establishing uniform licensing procedures.

Sponsors: Representatives Dyer, Backlund, Cody and Murray; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/11/96, 1/19/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Hymes, Vice Chairman; Cody, Ranking Minority Member; Murray, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Casada; Conway; Crouse; Morris; Sherstad; Skinner and H. Sommers.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The Department of Health is the licensing and regulatory authority for 16 health professions and the central host agency for 15 other regulated health professions for administrative purposes.

The secretary of Health is responsible for setting all license, certification and registration fees. By law, regulatory program costs are borne by licensees of the respective health professions, and the fees must be set at sufficient levels to defray administrative costs.

Administrative procedures and requirements relating to licensing application forms, renewal periods, late renewal periods and penalties, scheduling and notice of examinations differ across professional regulatory programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The secretary of Health, in consultation with the professional boards and commissions, is required to establish by rule, uniform administrative procedures and requirements, as well as fees, associated with the issue and renewal of licenses, certifications and registrations of the regulated health professions. Administrative procedures and requirements do not include qualifications for licensure, scopes of practice or disciplinary authority granted to boards or commissions.

This rule-making authority expires July 1, 1998, unless extended by the Legislature. The secretary must report to the Legislature by December 31, 1997, with recommendations on rule-making authority over administrative procedures and requirements.

Technical changes are made to conform to existing law.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Amendments were added that clarify the secretary's rule-making authority. The secretary must consult the boards and commissions in the rule-making process. The secretary's authority to streamline and standardize administrative procedures and requirements is confined to rule-making, not policy. This rule-making authority does not include anything other than administrative matters. A sunset termination date of July 1, 1998, is provided for the secretary's authority, unless extended by the Legislature. The secretary will report to the Legislature by December 31, 1997, with recommendations on the rule-making authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 11, 1996.

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

Testimony For: There is a need to streamline and standardize administrative requirements and procedures cutting across some 31 professional regulatory programs under the Department of Health. These include the procedures for applications for licensure, renewal, fees and other routine licensing functions. The department hopes to save some \$86,000 per biennium ultimately in a more standardized process. The department notes the concern expressed by some professions that this administrative rule-making might impinge on policy matters expressly within the preserve of the boards and commissions. The "agreed" amendments adopted to the bill assure that the scope of rule-making authority will be confined to purely administrative matters.

Testimony Against: None on substitute bill.

Testified: Ron Weaver, Department of Health; Carl Nelson, WSMA; Greg Hanon, WA State Veterinarians; Linda Hull, WA State Dental Assn.; Steve Lindstrom, Acupuncture Assn.; and Jeff Larsen, WSRCC