

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1534

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care

Title: An act relating to identifying health care providers covered by the retired health care provider liability malpractice insurance program.

Brief Description: Identifying health care providers covered by the retired health care provider liability malpractice insurance program.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Hinkle, Cody, Morrell, Schual-Berke, Skinner, Curtis, Clibborn, Campbell and Kagi; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/18/05, 2/25/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the program that purchases malpractice insurance for retired primary health care providers to include certain retired specialty care providers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Hinkle, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (Department) administers a program to purchase malpractice insurance for certain retired primary health care providers who volunteer their services to low-income patients. In order to qualify, the provider must be a physician, osteopathic physician, naturopath, physician assistant, osteopathic physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, dentist, or other health care provider whose profession is determined to be in short supply. Providers may only perform primary health care services which are limited to noninvasive procedures. Providers may not perform any obstetrical care or specialized care and procedures. Providers may only practice at clinics that are public or private nonprofit organizations or other practice settings as defined by the Department.

Summary of Bill:

The Department program that provides liability malpractice insurance to retired primary health care providers is expanded to include retired specialty care providers. The specialists that may be included in the program are limited to those who practice in specialties where the malpractice insurance premiums are comparable to primary care providers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There are health care professionals in specialty care areas that would like to volunteer their services. This program is a way to recruit health care providers to volunteer. Many free clinics and community health centers have specialists to volunteer their services, but do not have the money to purchase liability insurance for them. This can help to alleviate significant issues in access to care.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health; Donna Mack, Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic; Sallie Neillie, Washington Health Foundation; Dr. Isaac Pope, Pope's Kids Place; Charles Heaney, King County Medical Society; and Dr. John Van Buskirk; Neighborhood Clinic, Tacoma.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.