

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2399

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to health care providers.

**Brief Description:** Creating a survey for health care providers.

**Sponsors:** Representative Cody.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 1/13/06, 1/20/06 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires Department of Health to send surveys on a biannual basis to health care providers to gather data about the health care work force.

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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 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Bailey, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

The Department of Health (Department) regulates over 57 health care professions. Currently, over 290,000 people hold a health care provider credential issued by the Department.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent to which there is a shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing the number of providers. In its 2002 report, the task force noted that there were shortages of health care professionals in several professions including dental hygienists, dentists, medical aides, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and radiology technologists. One of the recommendations of the task force was to "develop a data collection and analysis system to assess health workforce supply and demand." The 2004 report from the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities also recommended that the state identify and collect "relevant and accurate data on health care professionals" as one way to reduce health disparities.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Department shall gather data related to the supply of health care providers and demographics of the health care work force through surveys that will be sent on a biannual basis to licensed health care providers. In developing the surveys, the Department shall collaborate with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and seek advice from researchers that are likely to use the survey data.

At a minimum, the surveys must include questions related to:

- specialty;
- birthdate;
- gender;
- race and ethnicity;
- hours in practice per week;
- practice statistics;
- zip code of the provider's practice;
- years and locations where the provider has practiced;
- education and training and where the education and training was received; and
- types of facilities where the provider practices.

The Department may approve proposals to distribute surveys requesting additional data to individual professions if: (1) there is a legitimate research interest; (2) the burden on members is not unreasonable; (3) the effect on survey response rates is not unreasonable; and (4) funds are available. The Department may accept funds from other entities to support the enhanced surveys.

Data elements from the surveys are confidential and exempt from public disclosure, unless they are released for study and analysis pursuant to a data sharing agreement. The Department shall make a public data set available that maintains the confidentiality of individual health care providers.

The failure to complete a survey may not be grounds for disciplinary action against a health care provider.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The authority to distribute the survey, create a distribution schedule, seek the advice of researchers, and include minimum data requests is changed from permissive to mandatory. The group to be surveyed is reduced from all credentialed health care providers to only licensed health care providers.

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**Appropriation:** None.**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2006.

**Testimony For:** (In support) This data will promote economic development and help local educational institutions plan class sizes and types of programs to offer. This will provide a uniform measurement of health care work force data. Performance measures can only succeed with good data and this will increase the availability of that data. There is a recognized need for this information about the health care work force.

(Comments only) There is data about demand for health care providers and a portion of the necessary data about supply. This data will help target resources.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Cody, prime sponsor; Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health; Ed Phippen, Health Workforce Institute; and Craig McLaughlin, State Board of Health.

(Comments only) Maddy Thompson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.