

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6194

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to multicultural education for health professionals.

Brief Description: Requiring multicultural education for health professionals.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Regala, Keiser, Eide, Prentice, Thibaudeau, Jacobsen, Fairley, McAuliffe, Fraser, Spanel, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/21/06, 2/23/06 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Requires education programs that train health care providers to incorporate multicultural health training into their curricula.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Bailey and Condotta.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (Department) regulates 57 health care professions. Currently, over 290,000 people hold a health care provider credential issued by the Department. The Legislature establishes general education and training requirements for each health profession. Specific disciplining authorities may be authorized to further define the initial education and training standards or to require continuing competency or continuing education prior to the renewal of a credential. Certain types of standard education and training requirements may apply across multiple professions, such as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) education or domestic violence education.

In 2004, the Legislature created the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities (Committee) through the adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419. The Committee issued a report on health disparities in Washington on November 1, 2005. The report contained several recommendations and findings for the Legislature's consideration. Among the Committee's recommendations was to "develop the knowledge, attitudes, and practice skills of health professionals and those working with diverse populations to achieve a greater understanding of the relationship between culture and health."

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department is required to establish an ongoing multicultural health awareness and education program. Disciplining authorities that may establish continuing education programs may provide multicultural health care training.

By July 1, 2008, education programs that train individuals to practice a health profession must incorporate multicultural health into their basic education preparation curriculum. An applicant for a license to practice a health care profession may not be denied a credential on the basis that the education program that he or she completed did not include multicultural health education in the curriculum.

"Multicultural health" is defined as the provision of health care services with the knowledge and awareness of the causes of health disparities between genders and racial and ethnic populations and the practice skills necessary to respond appropriately.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill requires the Department to establish an ongoing multicultural health awareness and education program and permits disciplining authorities that may establish continuing education programs to provide multicultural health care training.

Education programs that train individuals to practice a health profession are required to incorporate multicultural health into their basic education preparation curriculum.

"Multicultural health" is defined as the provision of health care services with consideration to the causes of health disparities between genders and racial and ethnic populations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (In support) Other states have passed multicultural education requirements for health care providers. This will help Washington's health care providers meet upcoming

mandates from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Provider-bias is still an issue in America.

(With concerns) This bill would require extensive reviews of applicant education programs and the effective date should be extended.

Testimony Against: (Opposed) While multicultural training is important, it should not be required by the Medical Commission. This is not an effective use of a health provider's limited time for continuing education since a couple of hours of training is not enough to obtain an adequate understanding of health disparities.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; and Ira SenGupta and Annette Anderson, Cross Cultural Health Care Program.

(With concerns) Brian Peyton, Department of Health.

(Opposed) Susie Tracy, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.