
Health Care Committee

ESSB 5599

Brief Description: Providing for a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Benson, Kline and McAuliffe).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates the Nursing Resource Center Account through a \$5 surcharge on certain nursing licenses to fund activities to collect and distribute data about the nursing workforce and to serve as a central resource for issues related to the nursing profession.

Hearing Date: 3/29/05

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) regulates advanced registered nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and nursing technicians. The Commission also has some responsibilities over nursing assistants. There are approximately 136,000 of these health care professionals credentialed in Washington.

In 2002, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations to increase the supply of providers. The task force's 2002 report to the Legislature cited that hospital registered nurse vacancy rates were 9.2 percent statewide in 2001 and that there is potential for a more severe shortage as the population ages.

Summary of Bill:

The "Nursing Resource Center Account" (Account) is created. The Account is to be funded through a \$5 surcharge added to the license fee for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The Department of Health (Department), in consultation with the Commission and the Board, shall award grants from the account to a nonprofit organization that is led by nurses and coordinates with representatives of different nursing organizations. The organization shall use the funds to:

- maintain data on the current supply and demand of nurses in Washington;
- monitor trends in the applicant pool for nursing programs;

- form partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession;
- evaluate the effectiveness of nursing programs to increase the access to nursing education and enhance career mobility;
- provide consultation and information related to state and national nursing resources;
- promote initiatives to improve patient safety and patient care;
- promote careers in nursing; and
- conduct other activities upon agreement of the Department.

The Account is a non-appropriated account and the Secretary of Health (Secretary) may authorize expenditures. The organization may not use any funds from the Account for administrative costs, lobbying, or activities not specifically listed. The Secretary may be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of collecting and distributing the surcharge. The Secretary may also adopt rules to implement the Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 28, 2005.

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