

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1343

As of March 14, 2013

Title: An act relating to the additional surcharge imposed on registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Brief Description: Removing the expiration for the additional surcharge imposed on registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Johnson, Moeller, Walsh, Morrell, Schmick, Green and Moscoso).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/13, 90-7.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 3/14/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Department of Health (DOH) charges fees to the various professions it regulates, to cover the cost of administering the licenses it issues. It has been state policy that the cost of each professional licensing program must be fully borne by the members of that profession. Fees are based on the actual cost to DOH for licensure activities and must not exceed this amount. However, there are exceptions. One exception is an amount added to the license fee for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. This additional amount of \$5 is for the support of a central nursing resource center. The ability of DOH to charge this additional amount for the purpose of funding the central nursing resource center was established by the Legislature in 2005 with the passage of ESSB 5599, which contained an end date of June 30, 2013.

The mission of the central nursing resource center is to contribute to the health and wellness of Washington State residents by ensuring that there is an adequate nursing workforce to meet the current and future health care needs of the citizens of the state of Washington. This is accomplished by providing grants funded by the additional licensure fee. DOH was required to review this program and make recommendations as to its effectiveness and whether it should continue. The review was completed and published in July 2012.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

DOH recommended that the Legislature: continue the \$5 license surcharge for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to support a central nursing resource center; continue issuing grants to a not-for-profit nursing center, funded by the surcharge to nurses; and revise the activities the Legislature should expect from a not-for-profit nursing center to reflect and align with emerging trends in public health and the health care delivery system.

Summary of Bill: The end date for the \$5 license surcharge for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses is removed. DOH will continue to charge the additional amount of \$5 to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to support the central nursing resource center.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill removes the sunset date on the fee that supports the Washington central nursing resource center. The date was originally added to ensure that there would be a review of the program to determine whether it is working. That review has been made and DOH recommends that the fee be continued. Nurses support paying the surcharge. The program and surcharge are self supporting; administrative costs from DOH are paid out of the surcharge. The center has done a good job in promoting nursing as a career and streamlining education. It is a great program that will terminate in July if this bill does not pass.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Cody, prime sponsor; Linda Tieman, WA Center for Nursing; Kate White Tudor, WA State Nurses Assn.