

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5205

As of February 12, 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: Senators Becker, Keiser, Schlicher, Parlette, Shin and Dammeier.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/11/13.

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 is to be fully borne by the members of that profession. Fees are based on the actual cost to DOH for licensure activities and are not to 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 healthcare needs of the citizens of the state of Washington. This is accomplished by providing grants funded by the additional licensure fee. The Legislature provided a detailed list of the activities for which the grants could be used which included the following:

- maintaining information on the current and projected supply and demand of nurses through the collection and analysis of the nursing workforce;
- monitoring and validating trends in the applicant pool for nursing;

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.

- facilitating partnerships between the nursing community and other health care providers and partners;
- evaluating the effectiveness of nursing education and articulation among programs to increase access to nursing education and enhance career mobility;
- providing consultation, technical assistance, data, and information related to nursing resources;
- promoting strategies to improve patient safety and quality patient care; and
- educating the public and students about opportunities and careers in nursing.

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.

DOH recommended that the Legislature:

- continue the \$5 license surcharge for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to support a central nursing resource center. This surcharge is set to expire June 30, 2013;
- continue issuing grants to a not-for-profit nursing center, funded by the surcharge to nurses, as an effective way to complete targeted activities identified by the Legislature; 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 healthcare delivery system.

Summary of Bill: DOH will continue to charge the additional amount of \$5 to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses past the June 30, 2013, date for the purpose of supporting the central nursing resource center. The end date is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Washington Center for Nursing (WCN) ensures a sufficient nursing workforce to meet the needs of this state. The WCN has made great progress in streamlining education; removing the surcharge will stop the work of the Center. Nurses who pay the surcharge now support continuing the surcharge. Nurses support the WCN. We need this resource and in a time of fiscal crisis, it is needed to keep the Center and address possible nursing shortages.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Kate White Tudor, WA State Nurses Assn.; Linda Tieman, WCN; Ellie Menzies, Service Employees International Union, Healthcare, #1199NW.