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**SENATE BILL 5178**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Bailey, Keiser, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to requiring the department of health to develop a hearing loss education program for health care professionals; and adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department, in consultation with the disciplining authorities as defined in RCW 18.130.040, must establish an ongoing hearing loss educational program as an integral part of its health professions regulation. The educational program must train health care professionals in identifying hearing loss in older adults and must include symptoms of hearing loss such as being noncommunicative, not responding to direct questions, or responding inappropriately to direct questions. The hearing loss educational program must be developed in collaboration with education programs that train students in that health profession. A disciplining authority may require that instructors of continuing education or continuing competency programs integrate the educational program into their curricula when it is appropriate to the subject matter of the instruction, with special emphasis on those health care professions who are likely to work with older adults or adults displaying symptoms of dementia.

(2) No funds from the health professions account may be used to fund activities under this section unless the disciplining authority authorizes expenditures from its proportions of the account. A disciplining authority may defray costs by authorizing a fee to be charged for participants or materials relating to any sponsored program.

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