

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5538

As of February 13, 2017

Title: An act relating to health profession licensure fees.

Brief Description: Concerning health profession licensure fees.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Mullet, Miloscia, O'Ban, Bailey, Keiser and Cleveland.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/13/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires an audit of the Department of Health health professions.
- Caps the indirect fee assessment of denturists.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Evan Klein (786-7483)

Background: Department of Health (DOH). The regulation of the health professions in Washington is divided between the Secretary of the DOH, the health profession boards, and the five health profession commissions. Responsibilities for licensing, examination, discipline, and rulemaking vary between the entities as do membership requirements.

Health Professions Account. The health professions account receives all fees from DOH professions licenses, registrations, certifications, renewals and examinations, and any civil penalties assessed and collected by DOH. All expenses incurred in carrying out the health professions is paid from the account. The secretary of DOH must, at the request of a board or commission, spend unappropriated funds in the health professions account that are allocated to the requesting board or commission to meet unanticipated costs of that board or commission when revenues exceed more than 15 percent over the DOH's estimated six-year spending projections for the requesting board or commission.

The cost of each professional, occupational, or business licensing program must be fully borne by the members of that profession, occupation, or business. Fees should be set at a level to defray the costs of administering the program being charged as well as the cost of

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.

regulating licensed volunteer medical workers. Each year, an indirect rate is set by DOH to be charged proportionally to each health profession to fund administrative programs and services at DOH. Indirect cost allocations are approved by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

Denturists. Licensed denturists are authorized to:

- make, place, construct, alter, reproduce, or repair a denture; and
- take impressions and furnish or supply a denture directly to a person or advise the use of a denture, and maintain a facility for the same.

To be licensed, a denturist must pay applicable fees and either:

- graduate from an approved educational program and pass an examination; or
- be licensed in another state and provide proof of passage of examination.

As of February 2017, denturist fees included:

- \$1,500 for an application;
- \$1,500 for the examination;
- \$500 for reexamination;
- \$1,855 for a license renewal; and
- \$750 for an inactive license renewal.

Summary of Bill: The State Auditor's Office must conduct a performance audit of DOH focused on the fee setting for each licensed health profession.

DOH is required to cap its fee assessments of denturists that are allocated to the indirect cost pool or to another health profession, at \$220.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It is important not to penalize a small health profession with disproportionate indirect cost fees. A newly licensed denturist pays over \$3500 in fees. This is disproportionately high in comparison to other professional licenses. Denturists have a high complaint rate, but the denturist board has disciplinary authority that is driving down the complaint rate and the costs associated. This would still be one of the highest indirect fees for any health profession, even if capped at \$220 per fee. The cost of the denturist examination is more expensive than other board exams for other dental health professions. Students think twice about joining the denturist profession due to the high fees.

OTHER: An audit of the health professions makes sense, but the Washington State Medical Association would like to make sure that other health professions don't make up the difference in the health professions account from the reduced fees in section 2 of the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Randi Becker, Prime Sponsor; Joe Kimmel, Denturist Student/Intern; Carolyn Logue, Washington Denturist Association.

OTHER: Roman Daniels-Brown, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.