
SENATE BILL 5228

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senators Randall, Lias, Das, Lovelett, Nobles, Wilson, C., Darneille, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Nguyen, and Robinson

Read first time 01/14/21. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing disproportionate health outcomes by
2 building a foundation of equity in medical training; adding new
3 sections to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that inequities in
6 health outcomes exist in the state of Washington and that future
7 generations of health care professionals have an important role to
8 play in mitigating these disparate outcomes. Because the schools of
9 medicine at the University of Washington and Washington State
10 University are tasked with the formative role of educating medical
11 professionals, the legislature sees fit to ensure students leaving
12 these institutions are prepared to care effectively for the people of
13 diverse cultures, groups, and communities that will become their
14 patients. By equipping them with the tools to serve diverse
15 communities around our state and our nation, students of medicine
16 will become practitioners of medicine with the knowledge, attitudes,
17 and skills to understand and counteract racism and implicit bias in
18 health care. The purpose of this act is to serve medical students,
19 medical professionals, and patients in communities in which these
20 professionals work, and to undo structural racism in the systems
21 through which they navigate. To that end, this act establishes

1 opportunities for education that provide tools to students of
2 medicine to build a better, more equitable health care system.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) By January 1, 2023, the school of medicine at the University
6 of Washington, established under chapter 28B.20 RCW, and the school
7 of medicine at Washington State University, established under chapter
8 28B.30 RCW, shall each develop curriculum on health equity for
9 medical students. The curriculum must teach attitudes, knowledge, and
10 skills that enable students to care effectively for patients from
11 diverse cultures, groups, and communities. The objectives of the
12 curriculum must be to provide tools for eliminating structural racism
13 in health care systems and to build cultural safety. A person may not
14 graduate with a degree from either medical school without completing
15 a course, or courses, that include curriculum on health equity for
16 medical students.

17 (2) Course topics on health equity may include, but are not
18 limited to:

19 (a) Strategies for recognizing patterns of health care
20 disparities and eliminating factors that influence them;

21 (b) Intercultural communication skills training, including how to
22 work effectively with an interpreter and how communication styles
23 differ across cultures;

24 (c) Historical examples of medical and public health racism and
25 how racism may manifest itself in a student's field of medicine;

26 (d) Cultural safety training that requires examination of each
27 student's culture and potential impacts on clinical interactions and
28 health care service delivery;

29 (e) Structural competency training that gives attention to forces
30 influencing health outcomes at levels above individual interactions;

31 (f) Methods of evaluating health care systems; and

32 (g) Implicit bias training to identify strategies to reduce bias
33 during assessment and diagnosis.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 (1) By January 1, 2022, the school of medicine at the University
37 of Washington, established under chapter 28B.20 RCW, and the school
38 of medicine at Washington State University, established under chapter

1 28B.30 RCW, shall each develop a goal that their student population
2 be more representative of the demographics of the state of
3 Washington. The goal shall focus on underrepresented students. Each
4 initial goal shall be set for January 1, 2025.

5 (2) The school of medicine at the University of Washington and
6 the school of medicine at Washington State University shall report
7 progress towards their goal on an annual basis through their public
8 websites.

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