

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5203

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,
JANUARY 16, 1992**

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to nursing home administration.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators West and Niemi; by request of Department of Health).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, M. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Sarena Seifer (786-7417)

Hearing Dates: February 6, 1991; February 14, 1991; January 15, 1992; January 16, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Nursing home administrators are licensed by the state under the Nursing Home Administrator Practice Act (Chapter 18.52 RCW). The regulatory authority for the profession is the State Board of Examiners for Licensing Nursing Home Administrators which is appointed by the Governor. The practice act specifies that there shall be nine members on the board and it provides specific requirements for board membership. Board members may be removed from office by the Governor for cause.

Current state statutes provide that nursing homes in Washington must be under the overall administrative charge and supervision of a licensed administrator. There is no statutory requirement that the administrator be located on site at the nursing home. The board establishes minimum educational requirements of nursing home administrators, including classroom hours of approved educational programs. Inactive administrators may be relicensed upon meeting board requirements for continued competency.

All fees collected from licensure of nursing home administrators are deposited in the state general fund.

SUMMARY:

The State Board of Examiners for the Licensing of Nursing Home Administrators is renamed as the State Board of Nursing Home Administrators. A nursing home administrator is required to be on site at the nursing home, except that a reasonable

person may substitute for the administrator while on leave if such responsibility is delegated in writing. The board shall establish rules defining parameters for on-site administrators in nursing homes with small populations, in rural areas and when nursing homes are temporarily without administrators.

A baccalaureate degree will be required for those who apply for licensure after July 1, 1992. Applicants must also meet any additional educational requirements the federal government may require. The administrator must also complete a practical experience requirement, pass the board's examination, be at least 21 years of age and must not have been charged with a violation of the Uniform Disciplinary Act (Chapter 18.130 RCW). Relicensure requires fulfilling a continuing education requirement. A limited license is available for administrators demonstrating membership in a church or religious denomination, teaching religious or spiritual means for healing through prayer.

Membership requirements on the State Board of Nursing Home Administrators are made less restrictive than current requirements. Four members are required to have actual experience as nursing home administrators prior to appointment. Four members shall be health care professionals who provide services in nursing homes, or individuals specializing in health care administration or long-term care who are employed at educational institutions. One member shall be a citizen eligible for Medicare. Board members may serve no more than two consecutive terms and shall serve until a successor is appointed.

Parts of the chapter pertaining to duties of the board and qualifications for licensure are rewritten using uniform credentialing boiler plate language. Fees collected from licensure will be deposited in the state's health professional account.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Individuals not in active administrative charge of a nursing home who are qualified by education, experience, training and examination may be licensed as nursing home administrators. Nursing home administrators will be required to be both on-site and full time. Absent administrators will be responsible to review all administrative decisions made by a temporary administrator during normal working hours. The board will establish rules defining parameters for on-site full-time administrators of separately licensed facilities that are located on the same campus and operated by one firm. The consumer member of the board must be a resident of a nursing home or a family member of a resident or a person eligible for Medicare. The effective date to apply for a license under the new educational requirements is extended for one year to July 1, 1993.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Nursing homes will be better managed by requiring nursing home administrators to be full time and located on-site and to have a baccalaureate degree and meet continuing competency requirements.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Dee Spice, Department of Health (pro); Ted Day, Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators (pro); Cathy Wiggins, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Hilke Faber, Washington State Nursing Home Resident Councils (pro); Kary Hyme, Ombudsman (pro); Scott Sigman, Washington Health Care Association (pro)