

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2711

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Brief Description: Funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Morrell, Cody, McIntire, Chase and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/27/04, 2/3/04 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/6/04 [DPS(HC)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Nursing Resource Center Account through a \$5 surcharge on nursing licenses to fund activities to collect data about the nursing workforce and to serve as a central resource for issues related to the nursing profession.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Edwards, Moeller, Rodne, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) regulates advanced registered nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and nursing technicians. The Commission also has some responsibilities over nursing assistants. There are approximately 125,000 of these health care professionals licensed in Washington.

In 2002, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing their numbers. The Board's 2002 report to the Legislature noted that hospital registered nurse vacancy rates were 9.2 percent statewide in 2001 and that there is potential for a more severe shortage as the population ages.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The "Nursing Resource Center Account" (account) is created. The account is to be funded through a \$5 surcharge added to licenses for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The Department of Health (Department) is to use these funds to contract with a central nursing resource center to: maintain data on the current supply and demand of nurses; form partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession; provide consultation and information related to state and national nursing resources; promote initiatives to improve the workplace environment for nurses; and promote careers in nursing.

The account is a non-appropriated account and the Secretary of Health (Secretary) may authorize expenditures. The Secretary may be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of collecting and distributing the surcharge. The Secretary may also adopt rules to implement the account.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Department of Health must consult with the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission in its contracting decisions. The organization to be contracted with must be a central nursing resource center. The \$5 surcharge only applies to licenses for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The center for nursing must collect data on the race and ethnicity of the nursing workforce. It is specified that the data collection is to complement other data gathering activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is a worsening nursing shortage in Washington. Additional resources and data are needed to address the shortage. This work will complement the data being gathered by other organizations. Ways to recruit new nurses and retain

existing nurses are needed to expand the nursing workforce.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Representative Morrell, secondary sponsor; Judy Huntington, Washington State Nurses Association; Dorothy Detlor, Washington State University, Washington Center for Nursing; and Helen Kuebel and Andrea Daniels, Lower Columbia College.

(Support with amendment) Ron Weaver, Department of Health; and Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Health Care be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Anderson, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chandler.

Staff: Amy Hanson (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will fund a centralized resource center to collect meaningful and current information about the nursing workforce, promote initiatives to create a better workplace environment for nurses, and encourage people to consider careers in nursing. The other goal is to work with K-12 and higher education in trying to encourage students to go into medical fields and nursing. Nurses and their associations are supporting this

bill and have expressed willingness to pay the \$5 fee because they know that the efforts of this center will benefit themselves, their patients, and the community as a whole. Other states are supporting similar nursing resource centers because they recognize the importance of maintaining a strong nursing profession for the health of their residents.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.