

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5577

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As of February 12, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to payment for nursing care services.

**Brief Description:** Modifying payment amounts for nursing care services.

**Sponsors:** Senators Winsley, Thibaudeau, Jacobsen, Keiser and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/13/03.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

**Background:** Nursing pools provide temporary health care personnel to health care facilities including hospitals and long-term care facilities. Nursing pools are registered with the Department of Health and must verify that each temporary employee or independent contractor meets the applicable minimum state credentialing requirements, including having a criminal background check.

Health care facilities use nursing pools when they are short-staffed, especially for night shifts and holidays. Facilities report that their reliance on nursing pools has grown in recent years, as the shortage of health care workers has worsened. Nursing pools charge facilities several times the rate of staff nurses. Currently, the state only reimburses facilities based on the amount that would be paid to staff nurses at the nursing facility.

**Summary of Bill:** Nursing pool employees may not bill a nursing facility more than 135 percent of the rate paid to nursing facility employees within their respective counties.

Effective July 2003, the direct care component of the Medicaid nursing facility rate must be recalculated to allow for the cost of purchased nursing services of up to 135 percent of the cost of local county rates for nursing facility employees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.