

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1667

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to fairness and equity in health professions licensing fees.

Brief Description: Regarding fairness and equity in health professions licensing fees.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Cody, Morrell, Ormsby, Moeller and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/14/07, 2/27/07 [DP].

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires that fees for regulating the health professions be established according to the three categories of credentials: registered, certified, and licensed.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Barlow, Campbell, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Condotta and Curtis.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Secretary of Health (Secretary) and the various health profession boards and commissions regulate the 57 health professions and 45 types of health care facilities and services. The Secretary is responsible for establishing fees for all of these regulated entities. Fees must be established according to the amount necessary to defray the costs of administering the program. Fees may be waived by the Secretary when it is determined that it is not in the best interest of public health and safety.

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.

Health professions are categorized in one of three levels of regulation. There are general characteristics associated with each category, however, in several cases there are variations from these features. Registration is the least restrictive form of regulation and it simply requires a submission of formal notification to the Secretary of the applicant's intent to practice a profession. Certification offers title protection for having met education and examination requirements, however, there is no requirement that individuals practicing a certified profession become certified in order to practice. Licensing requires that an applicant pass an examination and complete an educational program in order to practice the profession.

In the 2006 Supplemental Operating Budget, the Department of Health (Department) was instructed to evaluate alternative models for funding the regulation of the health professions. The study identified an option for funding health professions regulation which established fees according to the level of credentialing. Under this option, licensed health care providers would pay \$125, certified health care providers would pay \$50, and registered health care providers would pay \$30.

Summary of Bill:

When adopting fees for health profession credentials, the Secretary must establish the fees so that they are equal for all health professions within each of the three categories of credentialing: registered, certified, and licensed. Fee levels must be sufficient to cover the costs of administering all of the professions within each category.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill gives the Department the ability to collect funds in fewer subaccounts of the Health Professions Account. The number of midwives has significantly decreased as their fees have increased. This bill will preserve affordable access to childbirth care. This bill has the potential to fix the health professions fee system. This bill more evenly distributes the burden of funding the credentialing and disciplinary work of the Department.

(With concerns) The current system of having each profession pay for the cost of their regulation is the most appropriate method for determining fees.

(Opposed) This bill does not say how the money collected will be distributed among the professions. National organizations have endorsed the current professional fee system that Washington uses.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Green, prime sponsor; Nick Federici and Audrey Levine, Midwives Association of Washington; Erin Greenlee; and Carolee Hall.

(With concerns) Joan Garner, Washington State Nurses Association.

(Opposed) Tim Layton, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.