

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2881

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**As Passed House:**  
February 13, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to the practice of dentistry.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the practice of dentistry.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Hinkle, Kenney and Cody).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care & Wellness: 1/31/08, 2/4/08 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/13/08, 94-3.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates an exception to examination requirements for those dental license applicants who have practiced in another state for at least five years and have completed a one year post-doctoral residency.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, DeBolt, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

Applicants for a license to practice dentistry may obtain a license without fulfilling the examination requirement if they: (1) hold a license in another state where they are actively practicing; and (2) graduated from a dental school that has been approved by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (Commission). The Commission has established rules to

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adopt the American Dental Association's Commission on Accreditation (ADACA) standards for the approval of dental schools and has approved all dental schools accredited by the ADACA as of 1993. The Commission's rules also require those applicants who graduated from a dental school that is not accredited by the ADACA, but is either approved by the Commission or listed by the World Health Organization, to complete at least two additional pre-doctoral or post-doctoral years of dental education.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

An applicant for a license to practice dentistry in Washington who has not graduated from a dental school approved by the Commission may obtain a license without meeting the examination requirement if he or she has practiced dentistry in another state for at least five years, completed a one year post-doctoral residency approved by the Commission, and met all other licensing requirements.

By November 15, 2009, the Commission must report to the Governor and the Legislature with recommended licensing standards for foreign-trained dentists. The recommendations must consider the balance between maintaining professional quality and having an adequate supply of dentists in Washington. The recommendations must also consider the use of standards established by accrediting organizations.

The act expires on July 1, 2010.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Half of the dentists in Washington will retire by 2013 and this bill will help to fill the void that will be coming. There is a shortage of dentists in Washington, especially those who work with underserved populations. Thirty-five of 39 counties in Washington are dental health care professional shortage areas. The shortage is most severe in rural areas and among underserved populations. There is a lack of Spanish-speaking dentists in Washington. This bill opens a pathway for qualified, experienced dentists to help alleviate a critical shortage of dentists in Washington. There are thousands of dentists in other states who received their education abroad who are excluded from practicing in Washington. There are fewer than 50 Spanish-speaking dentists in Washington. Mexican-Americans have the highest rate of dental decay and are the least likely to visit a dentist. This bill will increase the number of dentists in Washington, including ethnic minorities and native Spanish speakers.

(Concerns) There are grave concerns about licensing foreign-trained dentists without following the current system that requires a two-year dental school residency and a licensing examination. If the Legislature wants to pursue this, there should be at least five years of practice and a residency, since most concerns about a new dentist do not arise until after five years of practice. Over the past few years, there have been several reasonable reforms to the licensing process so that dentists from other states can practice in Washington. The current efforts to increase the number of licensed dentists in Washington is working. The Commission on Dental Accreditation is currently reaching out to dental schools from other countries to accredit them according to United States' standards. States that have reduced their licensing standards to bring in dentists from other states have had disciplinary problems with those dentists.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Janice Palm; and Donald Barker, Commission on Hispanic Affairs.

(Concerns) John Davis; and David Hemion, Washington State Dental Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.