
HOUSE BILL 3277

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Kretz, Williams, and McCune

Read first time 01/28/08. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing shortages of health care specialists
2 in rural areas; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) A 1990 study of the shortage of trained health care specialists
6 confirmed that there is a need for health care professionals with
7 multiple skills in rural areas;

8 (b) Low patient volumes in rural hospitals and primary care clinics
9 continue to make it financially difficult to hire and retain separate
10 individuals with skills from each of these health care specialist
11 professions. The result is that patients continue to be forced to seek
12 health care in urban areas because the care cannot be provided locally;
13 and

14 (c) Some limited cross-credentialing of health care specialists,
15 including health care assistants, radiologic technologists, respiratory
16 therapists, and pharmacy and laboratory technologists, without a
17 reduction in the quality of health care provided by such individuals,
18 continues to be desirable in rural areas where shortages in health care

1 professionals exist. In addition, expansion of the health care
2 services that may be delegated to these health care specialists also
3 would increase access to health care in rural areas.

4 (2) The department of health, in consultation with the board of
5 health, the higher education coordinating board, representatives of
6 rural hospitals and rural primary health care clinics, and other
7 appropriate entities selected by the department of health, shall:

8 (a) Update the study conducted by the department of health in 1990
9 on methods to create opportunities for developing a pool of individuals
10 who are cross-trained in the specialty services provided by health care
11 assistants, radiologic technologists, respiratory therapists, and
12 pharmacy and laboratory technologists; and

13 (b) Assess the potential for improving rural health care if
14 additional authority is granted for licensed health care professionals
15 to delegate the provision of health care services to health care
16 specialists.

17 (3) The department of health shall:

18 (a) Assess the need in rural areas for health care specialists with
19 multiple skills;

20 (b) Assess the need in rural areas for licensed health care
21 professionals to have additional authority to delegate the provision of
22 health care services to health care specialists;

23 (c) Determine the barriers to cross-credentialing health care
24 specialists with multiple skills without reducing the quality of health
25 care;

26 (d) Examine current training, education, and state credentialing
27 requirements for each of the affected professions;

28 (e) Identify what training and educational requirements are needed
29 to allow for the medical practice of individuals with multiple skills;

30 (f) Develop recommendations on changes in current credentialing
31 requirements to allow for credentialing of individuals with multiple
32 skills; and

33 (g) Develop recommendations on the rural areas of the state in
34 which the practice of either cross-credentialed individuals or
35 expansion of delegation authority, or both should be allowed.

36 (4) The department of health shall report to the appropriate
37 committees of the senate and house of representatives by December 1,

1 2008, on changes necessary in current credentialing requirements to
2 accomplish its recommendations.

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