

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1808

As of March 24, 2009

Title: An act relating to an interdisciplinary work group with faculty from a paramedic training program and an associate degree in nursing program.

Brief Description: Creating an interdisciplinary work group for paramedic and nursing training.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Hinkle, Morrell, Bailey, Green and Kelley).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/09, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/24/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has approved 24 community and technical colleges to offer practical nursing programs (LPN). The Department of Health (DOH) approves paramedic training programs currently offered at Bellingham, Spokane, Tacoma, Clark, and Columbia Basin Community Colleges culminating in the award of either a certificate or an Associate of Applied Science degree. The DOH has also approved entities like fire departments to offer paramedic training.

"Course equivalency" is a term that describes how a course offered by one college or university relates to a course offered by another. If a course is viewed as equal or better than the course offered by the receiving college or university, the course can be counted as equivalent and can be used to meet graduation requirements. Faculty typically review course syllabi, skill competencies, and learning outcomes in determining whether a course is equivalent to another.

"Competencies" or "skill competencies" are the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student should be able to demonstrate after completing a course of study. In some cases, competencies are used as the basis of determining course equivalency.

Summary of Bill: The SBCTC identifies a community or technical college that offers both a paramedic training program and a nursing program. Faculty from both programs, a four-year

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nursing program, the Washington Center for Nursing, and the Washington State Nursing Association must form an interdisciplinary workgroup to identify course equivalencies and skill competencies between the two programs. The workgroup must report its findings to the SBCTC by July 1, 2010. The SBCTC may use the findings from the workgroup as the basis for statewide policies governing articulation between paramedic and nursing programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 17, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a high burn-out rate for paramedics and they need viable alternatives. Paramedics get extensive on-going training that is directly applicable to nursing. It is difficult for mid-career paramedics to take two years off work to get a nursing degree, but this would be made easier by this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Hinkle, prime sponsor.