

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1545

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As of March 25, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to the safe practice of public health nurses dispensing certain medications.

**Brief Description:** Encouraging the safe practice of public health nurses dispensing certain medications.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Robinson, Johnson and Cody.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/09/15, 62-36.

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 3/24/15.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Staff:** Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

**Background:** Local health departments consist of the county or district that provides public health services to persons within the area. In general these services may include programs to decrease tobacco use, stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, provide immunizations against certain communicable diseases, provide information on chronic disease prevention, promote safe food handling, provide wellness information, provide information to pregnant women or women who have an infant or child under the age of five and need food assistance, and provide information on safe drinking water.

Local health officers are physicians who are appointed as the health officer for the local health department.

Registered nurses must be licensed by the Department of Health to perform nursing care to individuals with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. Registered nurses who work at or under the general direction of other health care professionals such as physicians, physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners, may administer medications, treatments, tests, and inoculations. Registered nurses do not have the authority to dispense drugs.

**Summary of Bill:** A registered nurse who is employed by a local health department may dispense a drug or device for purposes of prevention or treatment of a communicable disease or family planning. Dispensing must be under the order of a person authorized to prescribe the drug or device. The local health officer must establish policies on such drug dispensing

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including procedures for drug dispensing, documentation storage, security, accountability, and record maintenance.

Drugs must be kept in a locked cabinet or drug room if a dispensing practitioner or registered nurse is not present. Drugs must be stored in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. Damaged, outdated, misbranded, or adulterated drugs must be kept physically separate from other drugs until they are destroyed or returned to their supplier. A dispensing record must be maintained separately from the patient chart and must be kept for at least three years. All records or receipt and disposal of drugs must be kept for a minimum of three years and available for inspection by the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission (PQAC).

Drugs that are dispensed in the practice of the expedited partner therapy treatment protocol may omit the patient's name from the label and be dispensed to the patient to be given to the patient's partner.

The PQAC may adopt rules to implement this act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: This bill is very supportive of local public health departments. It protects public health nurses and codifies what is current practice. It will help local public health nurses to respond at the local level to communicable disease outbreaks. This will provide clear guidance in statute to the practice of local public health nurses.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Robinson, prime sponsor; Brad Banks, WA State Assn. of Local Public Health Officials.

**Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.