
College & Workforce Development Committee

SSB 5228

Brief Description: Addressing disproportionate health outcomes by building a foundation of equity in medical training.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Liias, Das, Lovelett, Nobles, Wilson, C., Darneille, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Nguyen and Robinson).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires public medical schools to develop health equity curriculum for medical students.
- Requires public medical school students to complete a course, or courses, on health equity prior to graduating.
- Requires each public medical school to create a goal regarding student representation and report progress on that goal annually.

Hearing Date: 3/10/21

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Washington state has two public medical schools: the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) and the Washington State University College of Medicine (WSUCOM).

The University of Washington School of Medicine was founded in 1946. It has a partnership with Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (known as WWAMI) to allow medical students

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from those states to receive medical education through the University of Washington. After completing the first phases of their program in their home state, the partnership allows students to complete clinical rotations in a variety of sites and environments within the five-state region. The partnership is the only five-state medical education program in the country.

The Washington State University College of Medicine, also known as the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, was created through legislation in 2015. The first cohort of medical students at WSUCOM began classes in 2017.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Within existing resources, by January 1, 2023, the UWSOM and WSUCOM must develop curriculum on health equity that teaches attitudes, knowledge, and skills to medical students that enable them to effectively care for patients from diverse cultures and communities. The objectives of the curriculum must be to provide tools for eliminating structural racism in health care systems and to build cultural safety. Medical students must complete the diversity course or courses prior to graduating.

Course topics on health equity may include:

- strategies for recognizing patterns of healthcare disparities and eliminating factors that influence them;
- intercultural communication skills training;
- historical examples of medical and public health racism and how racism can manifest itself in a student's field of medicine;
- cultural safety training;
- structural competency training;
- methods of evaluating health care systems; and
- implicit bias training.

Within existing resources, by January 1, 2022, the UWSOM and WSUCOM must develop a goal focused on increasing the number of underrepresented students, guided by the state's need for physicians from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and each school's predominant equity goals. In developing the goal, special consideration may be given to students attending the UWSOM as a part of WWAMI. Each initial goal must be set for January 1, 2025.

The UWSOM and WSUCOM must report progress toward their goal on an annual basis through their public websites.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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