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**SENATE BILL 5503**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Robinson, Cleveland, Mullet, Holy, Randall, Nobles, and C. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to establishing requirements for uniform clinical placement hours for nursing education programs; and amending RCW 18.79.110.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 18.79.110 and 2013 c 229 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission shall keep a record of all of its proceedings and make such reports to the governor as may be required. The commission shall define by rules what constitutes specialized and advanced levels of nursing practice as recognized by the medical and nursing profession. The commission may adopt rules or issue advisory opinions in response to questions put to it by professional health associations, nursing practitioners, and consumers in this state concerning the authority of various categories of nursing practitioners to perform particular acts.

(2)(a) The commission shall approve curricula and shall establish criteria for minimum standards for schools preparing persons for licensing as registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses under this chapter. The commission shall approve such schools of nursing as meet the requirements of this chapter and the commission, and the commission shall approve establishment of basic nursing education programs and shall establish criteria as to the need for and the size of a program and the type of program and the geographical location. The commission shall establish criteria for proof of reasonable currency of knowledge and skill as a basis for safe practice after three years' inactive or lapsed status. The commission shall establish criteria for licensing by endorsement. The commission shall determine examination requirements for applicants for licensing as registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses under this chapter, and shall certify to the secretary for licensing duly qualified applicants.

(b) The commission shall limit the number of clinical or direct patient care experience hours required for registered nurse and licensed practical nurse licensure to:

(i) Three hundred hours for licensed practical nursing education programs;

(ii) Five hundred hours for associate degree nursing education programs; and

(iii) Six hundred hours for bachelors of science in nursing programs.

(c) The commission shall annually review the number of hours and may adjust if necessitated by national licensing or accreditation standards.

(3) The commission shall adopt rules on continuing competency. The rules must include exemptions from the continuing competency requirements for registered nurses seeking advanced nursing degrees. Nothing in this subsection prohibits the commission from providing additional exemptions for any person credentialed under this chapter who is enrolled in an advanced education program.

(4) The commission shall adopt such rules under chapter 34.05 RCW as are necessary to fulfill the purposes of this chapter.

(5) The commission is the successor in interest of the board of nursing and the board of practical nursing. All contracts, undertakings, agreements, rules, regulations, decisions, orders, and policies of the former board of nursing or the board of practical nursing continue in full force and effect under the commission until the commission amends or rescinds those rules, regulations, decisions, orders, or policies.

(6) The members of the commission are immune from suit in an action, civil or criminal, based on its disciplinary proceedings or other official acts performed in good faith as members of the commission.

(7) Whenever the workload of the commission requires, the commission may request that the secretary appoint pro tempore members of the commission. When serving, pro tempore members of the commission have all of the powers, duties, and immunities, and are entitled to all of the emoluments, including travel expenses, of regularly appointed members of the commission.

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