
SENATE BILL 5990

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senator Muzzall

Prefiled 01/05/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding the qualifications of those who may
2 serve as a local health officer in rural counties; and amending RCW
3 70.05.050.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 70.05.050 and 1996 c 178 s 19 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 ((The)) (1)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the
8 local health officer shall be an experienced physician licensed to
9 practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery in
10 this state and who is qualified or provisionally qualified in
11 accordance with the standards prescribed in RCW 70.05.051 through
12 70.05.055 to hold the office of local health officer.

13 (b) In counties with a population of less than 100,000 as of the
14 effective date of this section, a person may hold the office of local
15 health officer if the person is licensed to practice as an advanced
16 practice registered nurse under chapter 18.79 RCW or as a physician
17 assistant under chapter 18.71A RCW.

18 (2) No term of office shall be established for the local health
19 officer but the local health officer shall not be removed until after
20 notice is given, and an opportunity for a hearing before the board or

1 official responsible for his or her appointment under this section as
2 to the reason for his or her removal.

3 (3) The local health officer shall act as executive secretary to,
4 and administrative officer for the local board of health and shall
5 also be empowered to employ such technical and other personnel as
6 approved by the local board of health except where the local board of
7 health has appointed an administrative officer under RCW 70.05.040.
8 The local health officer shall be paid such salary and allowed such
9 expenses as shall be determined by the local board of health.

10 (4) In home rule counties that are part of a health district
11 under this chapter and chapter 70.46 RCW the local health officer and
12 administrative officer shall be appointed by the local board of
13 health.

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