

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1500

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to hearing aids.

Brief Description: Modifying hearing aid regulatory authority.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives R. Johnson, Dyer, L. Johnson and Mastin.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 26, 1993, DPS;
Passed House, March 11, 1993, 98-0;
Amended by Senate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Campbell; Conway; Cooke; Flemming; R. Johnson; Lisk; Mastin; Mielke; Morris; Thibaudeau; and Veloria.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The Council on Hearing Aids examines applicants for licensure as hearing aid fitters and dispensers, and disciplines license holders for unprofessional conduct. The membership of the council consists of nine persons appointed by the governor, five of whom are licensed hearing aid fitters-dispensers, including one physician, one nondispensing audiologist, and two persons representing the public. By law, the secretary or designee is a nonvoting member of all boards.

The Department of Health is required to supply and examine audiometric testing equipment and facilities for the purpose of examinations, and to periodically inspect hearing aid facilities.

License holders must file with the department a \$10,000 surety bond or cash deposit or negotiable security running

to the state for the benefit of any person injured or damaged by a violation of this practice act.

There is no authority for license holders to place their licenses on inactive status.

Summary of Bill: The nomenclature of the council is changed to Board on Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Aids. Its membership is reduced to seven persons, of whom two are licensed hearing aid fitters-dispensers without masters degrees in audiology, two with masters degrees, a medical or osteopathic physician who is an advisory nonvoting member, and two persons representing the public. In the event of a tie, the chair abstains from voting.

The authority of the department to supply audiometric testing equipment, and to inspect facilities of persons who deal in hearing aids is repealed.

The bond number of the license holder must be printed on the invoice for the purchase of a hearing aid.

License holders may place their licenses on inactive status upon the payment of specified fees, in accordance with conditions in rules adopted by the board. For reinstatement, license holders not practicing for five years must retake the practical examination and take continuing education requirements within the previous 12 months. Licenseholders on inactive status from two to five years must also take these continuing education requirements. License holders on inactive status but holding licenses from other states must attest to their knowledge of the current state practice law.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The Senate amendment restores existing language requiring the Department of Health to provide periodic examination of audiometric testing equipment and to carry out the periodic inspection of facilities where hearing aids are fitted and dispensed.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The practice law is updated in a number of respects. These "housekeeping" changes are necessary for the efficient administration of the practice law.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Lisa Thatcher, Washington Hearing Aid Society (pro); Janyce Mose, Washington Council on Hearing Aids (pro); and Carl Nelson and Dr. Leonard Hayes, Washington State Medical Association.

VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Yeas 98