

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1353

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Brief Description: Providing for a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Morrell, Cody, Clibborn, Campbell, Williams, Conway and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/10/05, 2/15/05 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/22/05, 2/28/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Nursing Resource Center Account through a \$5 surcharge on certain nursing licenses to fund activities to collect and distribute data about the nursing workforce and to serve as a central resource for issues related to the nursing profession.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Alexander, Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Condotta and Hinkle.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) regulates advanced registered nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and nursing technicians. The Commission also has some responsibilities over nursing assistants. There are approximately 136,000 of these health care professionals credentialed in Washington.

In 2002, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations to increase the supply of providers. The task force's 2002 report to the Legislature cited that hospital registered nurse vacancy rates were 9.2 percent statewide in 2001 and that there is potential for a more severe shortage as the population ages.

Summary of Bill:

The "Nursing Resource Center Account" (Account) is created. The Account is to be funded through a \$5 surcharge added to the license fee for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The Department of Health (Department) shall award grants from the account to a nonprofit organization that is led by nurses and coordinates with representatives of different nursing organizations. The organization shall use the funds to:

- maintain data on the current supply and demand of nurses in Washington;
- monitor trends in the applicant pool for nursing programs;
- form partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession;
- evaluate the effectiveness of nursing programs to increase the access to nursing education and enhance career mobility;
- provide consultation and information related to state and national nursing resources;
- promote initiatives to improve patient safety and patient care; and
- promote careers in nursing.

The Account is a non-appropriated account and the Secretary of Health (Secretary) may authorize expenditures. The organization may not use any funds from the Account for administrative costs, lobbying, or activities not specifically listed. The Secretary may be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of collecting and distributing the surcharge. The Secretary may also adopt rules to implement the Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: A central nursing resource center is necessary to resolve the nursing shortage and assure a sufficient supply of appropriately trained nurses. Data on the nursing workforce is necessary to assist in making public policy decisions.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Morrell for Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Dorothy Detlon, Dean of Washington State University College of Nursing; Marilyn Savage, UFCW Local 141 Union; and Susan Jacobson, Washington State Nurses Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Clements.

Staff: Amy Hanson (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

The substitute bill removes the Nursing Resource Center's authority to conduct other activities as agreed upon by the Department of Health (DOH), and clarifies that funds may be used to promote strategies to enhance patient safety and quality patient care rather than initiatives. The bill specifies that funds from the account may not be used for lobbying. Finally, the program is to be reviewed by the DOH by June 30, 2012 and will expire June 30, 2013.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: There is a critical shortage of nurses in Washington and as the population ages the shortage will get worse. Other states are supporting similar nursing resource centers because they recognize the importance of maintaining a strong nursing profession for the health of their residents. The bill will also provide the opportunity to go out into the schools to provide information on nursing careers. In order to ensure an on-going sufficient supply of appropriately educated nurses in Washington, we need to have a central resource center that is dedicated to addressing the nursing education and practice issues in the state. To address the nursing shortage and to prevent future shortages, much more data needs to be collected to drive public policy decisions. All of the costs associated with the nursing resource center will be borne by the \$5 surcharge on nursing licenses. We must have a comprehensive approach towards addressing the important issues facing the nursing profession.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; and Dorothy Detler, Washington State University College of Nursing and Washington Center for Nursing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.