

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5796

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Health Care*

Title: An act relating to the certification and registration of nursing assistants.

Brief Description: Making major changes to nursing assistant licensure.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senator Niemi).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, March 27, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH CARE**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Casada, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cantwell; Edmondson; Franklin; Morris; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Current law provides for the registration and certification of nursing assistants, and appears in three separate chapters of the code. Chapter 18.52A RCW provides for the qualifications and training requirements of nursing assistants working in the state's nursing homes or rural hospital wings operating nursing home swing beds. Chapter 18.52B RCW provides for certification of nursing assistants. Chapter 18.88A RCW establishes a certification and registration program for nursing assistants working in a health care facility. The state Board of Nursing determines minimum educational requirements, defines and approves experience requirements, and performs other activities associated with certification of nursing assistants.

Nursing assistants, in practice prior to the enactment of the 1989 law authorizing the certification of nursing assistants, could be certified automatically if they applied to the board prior to January 1, 1990, and met commonly accepted standards of nursing education and experience.

Summary of Bill: The Nursing Assistants Practice Act is technically reorganized into one chapter of the code.

The registration requirement of nursing assistants, as well as the voluntary certification process, is preserved. As such, the state Board of Nursing is directed to determine minimum educational requirements, approve training programs, administer the certification examination, define experience requirements and implement the continued competency evaluation program. The secretary of the Department of Health has general authority to administer the regulatory program, and acts as the disciplinary authority. Certification is voluntary for nursing assistants working in health care facilities unless otherwise required by state or federal requirements. The state Board of Nursing is required to promulgate rules regarding the scope of practice of nursing assistants. Exemptions from regulation are included for those regulated under other practice acts, employees of the federal government, and nursing students. Licensure by endorsement of nursing assistants credentialed in other states is authorized. A person who allows certification to lapse for more than three years must demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the board for the purpose of recertification. The secretary of the Department of Health is required to establish procedural requirements and fees for renewal of registrations and certificates.

The "grandparent" date allowing nursing assistants in current practice to become certified without examination is extended from January 1, 1990, to December 31, 1991.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The nursing assistant profession is currently governed by three separate statutes which have caused confusion. The bill corrects this by combining them into one statute. It also extends the date of the grandparent clause for nursing assistants to be certified. This will allow the department enough time to inform registered nursing assistants so that they might qualify for this provision.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: JoAnn Shoemaker, Nursing Assistant Advisory Committee (pro).