

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5204

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*As Passed Legislature*

**Title:** An act relating to practical nurses.

**Brief Description:** Changing licensure provisions for licensed practical nurses.

**Sponsor(s):** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care  
(originally sponsored by Senators West and Niemi; by request of Department of Health).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Health Care, March 27, 1991, DPA;  
Passed House, April 17, 1991, 95-0;  
Passed Legislature, 95-0.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH CARE**

**Majority Report:** *Do pass as amended.* 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:** The practice of nursing by practical nurses is licensed by the state and regulated by the state Board of Practical Nursing, which is responsible for approving applications for licensure, administering the licensure examination, and approving the educational curriculum of practical nursing training programs.

However, the use of the title of practical nurse is not restricted to those who are licensed as such. There is no limitation on the number of terms for board membership, nor is there any requirement for a minimum number of meetings that the board may have annually. There is no current requirement for the board to consult with the State Board of Community College Education and the superintendent of public instruction in determining the curriculum of nursing programs.

Applicants for licensure must have completed at least a 10th grade course or its equivalent, as well as a board approved training program.

The board is authorized to appoint an executive secretary whose qualifications are specified by law.

Licensed practical nurses must practice under the direction and supervision of physicians, dentists, podiatric physicians or registered nurses.

**Summary of Bill:** The practice act for licensed practical nurses is updated generally.

Individuals who represent themselves as licensed practical nurses are required to be licensed. The board is directed to meet at least quarterly. Board members may serve for no more than two consecutive terms and shall serve until successors are appointed by the governor. The board is directed to consult with the State Board for Community Colleges and the superintendent of public instruction in formulating the curriculum for approving training programs and schools. Institutions desiring to conduct a school or program for practical nurse training must submit evidence to the board showing they can meet minimum standards and teach the approved curriculum.

Applicants for licensure must possess a high school diploma, or its equivalent, meet requirements established by the board and be free of violations of the Uniform Disciplinary Act. Licensees must provide evidence at the time of license renewal that they have kept their knowledge and skill current.

The specified qualifications of the executive secretary of the board are removed from statute, and the board and the secretary of the Department of Health together are directed to determine the minimum qualifications.

Advanced registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants may supervise licensed practical nurses, along with physicians, dentists and podiatric physicians.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill makes technical and minor policy changes which enable the board to more efficiently operate.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** JoAnn Shoemaker, Licensed Practical Nurses Association of Washington State (pro); and Susan Boots, Department of Health (pro).