

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5371

AS PASSED SENATE, JANUARY 29, 1992

Brief Description: Allowing retired physicians to provide medical services to low-income persons.

SPONSORS: Senators Matson, Rasmussen, Erwin, Thorsness, Oke, Craswell, Stratton and Wojahn.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Nelson, Chairman; Thorsness, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Hayner, L. Kreidler, Newhouse, and Rasmussen.

Staff: Ben Barnes (786-7465)

Hearing Dates: January 31, 1991; February 4, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Under current law, a physician or hospital licensed in this state is immune from civil liability for rendering emergency medical care to a patient.

It is suggested that the immunity statute be amended to include retired physicians who provide free medical services to low-income persons.

SUMMARY:

The Secretary of Health is authorized to issue a limited license to qualified retired physicians that will permit the physician to provide free medical care to low-income citizens at a registered low-income or nonprofit health care provider clinic or service or in a for-profit clinic during certain prescribed hours.

The Secretary of Health may only issue a limited license to a retired physician who was previously licensed and whose license was not suspended or revoked at the time he or she retired. The cost of the license is \$5.

Retired physicians are required to meet the same continuing education requirements and are subject to the same professional and disciplinary standards as regular licensees. Retired physicians may only provide "primary care." Primary care is limited to noninvasive procedures and does not include obstetrical care or any specialized care and treatment.

Low-income or nonprofit health care provider clinics or for-profit clinics that designate certain hours as nonprofit are required to register with the Secretary of Health.

A regularly licensed physician or a retired physician with a limited license who, in good faith, provides free medical care to low-income persons is immune from civil liability for any act or omission occurring in the course of such care.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 28, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

The bill would allow low-income persons to obtain medical services that they would otherwise not receive.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The bill would establish a different standard of care for low-income persons.

TESTIFIED: Rep. John Moyer (pro); Cliff Webster, Washington Medical Association (pro); Suzanne Johnson, Group Health (pro); MaryAnn Ottinger, WSTLA (con)