

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1500

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to hearing aids.

Brief Description: Modifying hearing aid regulatory authority.

Sponsors: Representatives R. Johnson, Dyer, L. Johnson and Mastin.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 26, 1993, DPS.

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 Substitute 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, and two persons representing the public.

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department to supply audiometric testing equipment, and to inspect facilities of persons who deal in hearing aids is repealed.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

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The physician is reinstated as a member of the board. The state responsibilities for bonding are restored.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: 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.