

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1694

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to the implementation of the 1993-95 health personnel resource plan.

Brief Description: Modifying the examination of health profession candidates for credentialing.

Sponsors: Representatives Dellwo, Dyer and Morris; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Campbell; Conway; Cooke; Flemming; Lisk; Mastin; Mielke; Morris; Thibaudeau; and Veloria.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The Department of Health is required to develop the health personnel resource plan, which creates statewide comprehensive policies for identifying health professions personnel shortages in underserved communities of the state as well as designing and implementing activities to alleviate those shortages. The department is required to make recommendations to the Legislature that facilitate the implementation of the plan.

One recommendation urges the health professions boards to use national recognized board examinations to facilitate the recruitment of applicants for licensure from other states. The veterinary and optometry boards have questionable authority to approve the use of national examinations. Another recommendation would authorize communities to fund educational slots for students willing to practice as state credentialed health practitioners in those communities.

The state Veterinarian Board of Governors prepares examination questions, conducts examinations, and grades the answers of applicants for licensure as veterinarians. The examination is conducted in English on specified subjects, however the board may waive the written portion of the examination of an applicant who has successfully taken the national board veterinary examination.

The Optometry Board conducts examinations of applicants for licensure as optometrists, and certifies to the secretary of health the results of examinations.

Summary of Bill: The veterinary board's authority to develop and administer licensure examinations is clarified to allow for the approval of national examinations. The list of specified subjects is repealed, as well as the authority to waive the written portion of the examination.

The authority of the Optometry Board to prepare and administer licensure examinations, on subjects determined by the board, is clarified to allow for the approval of national examinations.

Under the health personnel resource plan, the department is authorized to develop a mechanism allowing underserved communities to contract with education and training programs to provide additional capacity, above the full time equivalent lids, for students who will practice in these underserved communities. These programs lead to eligibility for practice as an osteopathic physician or physician's assistant, a physician or physician's assistant, an advanced nurse practitioner or nurse midwife, or other practitioners as needed.

Students must meet all applicable educational program requirements, providing assurances to the community that they will practice there as a condition for receiving community financial assistance. Students serving at least three years in the community are not obligated to repay any educational assistance funds.

The department may provide funds to underserved communities for use in contracting.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The legislation is intended to implement portions of the 1993-95 health personnel resource plan. It

will assist communities in educating and placing health practitioners to serve the health needs of the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jack Melton and Callie Wilson, Department of Health (pro).