

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2508

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to health care professional temporary substitute resource pool.

Brief Description: Modifying the health professional temporary resource pool.

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

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, January 25, 1994, DP;
Passed House, February 4, 1994, 91-0;
Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 16 members:
Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Backlund; Conway; Cooke; Flemming; R. Johnson; Lemmon; Lisk; Mastin; Morris; Thibaudeau and Veloria.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The Department of Health has administrative responsibility for the Health Professional Temporary Substitute Resource Pool program. The program is directed to assist rural communities in providing short-term assistance in obtaining health providers where shortages exist. The department contracts with the Area Health Education Center, an affiliate of Washington State University, which works directly with the communities and administers the program.

The department must establish the program, but its authority to contract for providing assistance is unclear.

The department must screen health providers, who are on the registry as available for practice on a short-term basis, for any unprofessional conduct.

For participating health providers, the department is required to reimburse travel and lodging, purchase or reimburse the cost of malpractice insurance premiums if necessary, and provide information on back-up support. The department may require a community match.

Certified Health Plans are not referenced as entities that may request assistance.

The department is required to establish the procedures and forms, and respond promptly to all requests for assistance.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health is expressly authorized to contract with entities in meeting its responsibilities for the Health Care Professional Substitute Resource Pool.

The department must list on a register those health practitioners available for temporary practice in rural communities, but its responsibility for screening providers for unprofessional conduct is repealed.

The rural community sites may receive reimbursement from the department for travel and lodging and malpractice insurance costs for participating practitioners, but the site is responsible for all salary expenses and referral and back-up coverage information.

Certified health plans may request temporary substitute provider assistance.

The department is authorized but is not required to provide or contract for services that establish procedures and forms and respond to requests for provider assistance.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: These changes clarify the department's authority to contract for the provision of services rather than directly administer the program. The changes accord the law to current practice.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Steve Boruchowitz and Kristina Sparks, Department of Health (pro).