

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5635

As Passed House
April 15, 1993

Title: An act relating to health profession disciplinary authority written communications.

Brief Description: Modifying procedures regarding disclosure of address of a health professional subject to a disciplinary complaint.

Sponsors: Senators Niemi and Talmadge.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, April 1, 1993, DPA;
Passed House - Amended, April 15, 1993, 93-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Conway; Cooke; R. Johnson; Lisk; Mastin; Mielke; Morris; Thibaudeau; and Veloria.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Individuals seeking or renewing a health professional credential must provide the Department of Health with a mailing address. The application and renewal forms used in collecting this information are considered public documents and subject to public inspection and copying. Many health care professionals may be unaware that their residential addresses and telephone numbers are available to the public.

When a person files a complaint against a credential holder, the disciplinary authority may communicate in writing with the person about the status of the complaint. Some departmental communications have included the home address of the credential holder. There is concern that disclosure of such information makes it easier for a person filing a complaint to locate and harass a credential holder at home.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health is prohibited from disclosing, to persons filing complaints against health

providers regulated under the Uniform Disciplinary Act, the addresses and telephone numbers of those providers. The department is required to inform providers of the disclosure requirements provided by law.

The federal social security number of health providers cannot be disclosed for public inspection and copying except upon the request of federal, state and local governments, and licensing, credentialing, investigatory, disciplinary and examination organizations. The residential address and residential phone number of health providers regulated under the Uniform Disciplinary Act cannot be disclosed for public inspection and copying, if the provider requests it and furnishes to the department an alternative or business address and telephone number. After January 1, 1995, the residential address and telephone number of providers are automatically withheld from public inspection and copying, if the provider furnishes an alternative or business address and telephone number.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The department unwittingly has furnished complainants with the home addresses and phone numbers of health providers against whom complaints have been filed. As a result, these providers have been harassed at home by angry clients who disrupt their domestic tranquility. Such information is personal and should remain confidential.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Susan B. Moores and Michael J. Barsanti, WATSA (pro).