

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5499

As Passed House - Amended:

April 9, 1999

Title: An act relating to in-home care agency licensure.

Brief Description: Making modifications to the home health, hospice, and home care agency licensure law.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Deccio, Franklin, Winsley, Costa, McAuliffe, Kline and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/23/99, 4/1/99 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/9/99, 93-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

(As Amended by House Committee)

- The Department of Health is authorized to determine home care licensure fees based on the geographic area served, the number of locations, and volume of service provided.
- The department is given authority to prorate licensure fees to facilitate combined inspections when the same entity has multiple licenses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander; Campbell; Conway and Edmonds.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background:

The home care licensure law regulates home health, hospice, and home care agencies. Implementing legislation was in 1988, with some revisions in 1993. Since that time, the home care industry has undergone significant changes. Today the industry treats many more people in their homes than it did 10 years ago. It also provides services to a much more diverse population, thanks in part to advances in medical technology. Services are provided to clients of all ages, and include everything from highly medically acute to long-term care for people with diabetes, AIDS, Alzheimers, and cancer.

Last year licensure fees for home care, home health, and hospice agencies were raised by 20 percent. These fees reflect changes in survey practices and other regulatory activities performed by the department in response to the growth of the industry.

The industry has sought changes in the home care licensure law to make regulatory practices more efficient than current law permits.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department of Health is authorized to determine home care licensure fees based on the geographic area served, the number of locations, and volume of service provided.

The department is given authority to prorate licensure fees to facilitate combined inspections when the same entity has multiple licenses.

The definition of "branch office" is removed and replaced with the term "service area."

The department is directed to report to the health care committees of the Legislature by November 1999 with recommendations for any further changes needed to the licensure law. The department is directed to study certain areas to determine if additional enforcement tools are needed for public protection.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The proposed changes are needed to make the licensing process more effective, efficient, and reflective of the way the home health industry is currently conducting business.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Wojahn, prime sponsor; Blanche Jones, Olsten Health Services; Byron Plan, Department of Health; and Gail McGaffick, Home Care Association of Washington.