

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1699

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, April 1, 1999

Title: An act relating to continuing education for dentists.

Brief Description: Establishing continuing education for dentists.

Sponsors: Representatives Parlette, Cody, Schoesler, Barlean, Esser, Edmonds and Van Luven.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 4/1/99 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Franklin and Winsley.

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: The practice of dentistry is licensed by the Department of Health, and no person may practice or refer to himself or herself as a dentist without being licensed. The Dental Quality Assurance Commission qualifies applicants for licensure and acts as the disciplinary authority for unprofessional conduct under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Continuing education is a method of staying current with new developments in science and technology by taking approved courses or learning opportunities related to a field of expertise. A number of the regulated health professions require continuing education as a condition for the renewal of licenses. The Legislature has found that requirements for licensees to engage in continuing education as a condition of continued licensure have not been proven to be an effective method of guaranteeing or improving the competence of licensees or the quality of care received by the consumer. Any legislative proposal for continuing education should be accompanied by evidence that continuing education is proven effective for the profession according to statute.

The dental commission does not have authority to establish a program of continuing dental education.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Dental Quality Assurance Commission must establish a continuing dental education program for applicants renewing their dental licenses, which applies to licenses after July 2001.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: An effective date is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Dentists favor keeping current in practice through continuing education. The Department of Health needs a later effective date.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Linda Hull, Washington State Dental Association (pro).