

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5903

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to increasing the license surcharge for the impaired physician program.

Brief Description: Changing physician license fees.

Sponsors: By Senators Winsley, Franklin, Costa and Thibaudeau.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/29/01 [DP];

Appropriations: 3/31/01, 4/2/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Raises the \$25 annual surcharge on physician licenses to no more than \$35 to fund the Impaired Physicians Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Campbell, Republican Co-Chair; Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Skinner, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Ballasiotes, Conway, Darneille, Edmonds, Edwards, Marine, McMorris, Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background:

A statutory surcharge of \$25 is added to a licensing fee or license renewal fee of physicians for financing the Impaired Physician Program. The Medical Quality Assurance Commission is required by law to enter into a contract with a professional entity which provides evaluation and treatment services to physicians impaired as a result of chemical abuse or mental illness to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety to their patients.

Summary of Bill:

The statutory surcharge of \$25 for financing the Impaired Physician Program is raised to no more than \$35.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Raises in the surcharge for funding the impaired physician program are necessary to provide needed services to impaired physicians.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Winsley, prime sponsor; and Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Benson, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Dunshee, Fromhold, Grant, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, Mastin, McIntire, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Lambert and Mulliken.

Staff: Linda Brooks (786-7153).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This increase in the fee surcharge will help to expand the services offered through the Impaired Physicians' Program, particularly in the area of mental health services. The original \$25 surcharge was imposed more than a decade ago when the program was first created.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.