

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5966

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care

Title: An act relating to increasing the supply of dentists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas.

Brief Description: Increasing the supply of dentists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Deccio and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/25/03, 3/27/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Applicants for a license to practice dentistry who are currently licensed in another state do not have to take the Washington State dental examination if they show proof of graduation from an approved dental program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The practice of dentistry is regulated by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (Commission). The Commission's responsibilities include coordinating examination preparation and administration; adopting licensure requirements; investigating complaints of unprofessional conduct; and issuing findings of unprofessional conduct and imposing sanctions for those violations.

By statute, applicants for a license to practice dentistry are required to: (1) show proof of graduation from a dental program approved by the Commission; (2) submit a recent picture; and (3) pass an examination approved by the Commission. The examination requirement may be waived if the applicant holds a current license to practice dentistry in another state and the Commission finds that the other state's licensing standards are substantively equivalent to Washington's standards.

The Commission's rules for applicants for a license to practice dentistry without examination require that the applicant submit: (1) a statement regarding any prior disciplinary actions or acts of unprofessional conduct; (2) a statement that they are not an impaired practitioner; (3) a certification that the dentist has been issued an unrestricted license to practice dentistry; (4) documentation that the licensing standards in the state of current licensure are substantially equivalent to Washington's standards; and (5) proof of current practice of dentistry.

Summary of Bill:

Applicants for a license to practice dentistry without examination, who hold a current license to practice dentistry in another state, are no longer required to have the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) determine whether the standards for the current state of licensure are substantively equivalent to Washington's standards. These applicants may qualify for a license if they have graduated from a dental program that is approved by the Commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will reduce barriers to licensure for dentists, increase access to dental care, and create administrative efficiency.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Deccio, prime sponsor; Linda Hull, Washington State Dental Association; and Patty Hayes, Department of Health.