

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1295

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to eliminating barriers to initial licensure in health professions.

Brief Description: Eliminating barriers to initial licensure in health professions.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Bailey, Cody, Kenney and Campbell; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/28/03, 2/4/03 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Clinical training provisions for acupuncture license applicants that require proof of quarter hours and patient contacts is replaced with a flat 500 hours of clinical training.
- Citizenship requirements for dispensing optician license applicants are eliminated.
- Proof of graduation from a nursing program requirements are changed to transcripts and provisions for certain students and graduates of nontraditional registered nursing programs to obtain clinical experience are added.
- Requirements that psychology license applicants pass both a written and oral exam are eliminated.
- Notarization requirements for applications for veterinarian license applicants are eliminated and the written exam, oral interview, and practical demonstration requirements are eliminated.
- A certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider is created to practice under the supervision of and to perform the same services as a certified sex offender treatment provider.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Edwards, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

In 2002 the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing the number of health care workers. The task force's final report identified shortages of health care providers in numerous fields including nurses, medical aides, dental hygienists, billers and coders, laboratory personnel, pharmacists, physicians, and radiology technologists. Several of those health care providers are regulated by the Department of Health (Department).

The Department and the various health profession boards issue credentials to 55 types of health care providers in this state. General qualifications that providers in these health care fields must meet are established in statute. The Department and the boards are responsible for developing more specific minimum standards to determine entrance into a profession based upon these statutory requirements.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Changes are made to the entrance requirements for the following categories of health care providers.

Acupuncture

The requirement that applicants for the state acupuncture exam complete a course in bacteriology is eliminated and replaced with a microbiology course. The clinical training provisions requiring that applicants demonstrate the completion of a combination of quarter credits and patient contacts and treatments is eliminated and replaced with a flat 500 hours of approved clinical training.

Dispensing Opticians

The requirement that applicants for the state dispensing optician exam certify under oath that they are United States citizens or intending to become citizens is eliminated.

Nursing

The requirement that applicants for a nursing license provide evidence of a diploma from a school of nursing is changed to a transcript demonstrating an applicant's graduation and successful completion of a nursing program. Active licensed practical nurses who are enrolled in or complete an approved nontraditional registered nurse program can meet their supervised clinical experience requirement by acquiring the experience: (1) under the supervision of a registered nurse preceptor with an unrestricted license and at least two years of experience in the same type of practice setting as where the preceptorship will occur; and (2) within six months of completing the nontraditional program.

Psychology

An applicant for a license to practice psychology must pass an exam, however, the requirement that there be both a written and oral exam is eliminated. The right to discuss exam performance with the Board of Psychology is eliminated.

Veterinary Medicine

The requirement that an application for a license to practice veterinary medicine be notarized is eliminated. An applicant for a license to practice veterinary medicine must pass an exam to be licensed, however, passing a written exam, an oral interview, and a practical demonstration is no longer required.

Sex Offender Treatment Providers

A new provider category is created, named the certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider. It is defined as a credentialed health professional that is certified by the Department to examine and treat special sex offenders under the supervision of a certified sex offender treatment provider. Applicants for this provider category must complete an approved education or training program; pass an exam; not have engaged in unprofessional conduct or be unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety due to physical or mental impairment; and other requirements provided by the Secretary of Health. Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers may perform the same services as a certified sex offender treatment provider as long as they are appropriately supervised. The Secretary of Health is authorized to issue certifications; determine minimum education, experience, and training requirements; and deny certification in accordance with the Uniform Disciplinary Act. Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers are covered by the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill allows students enrolled in a nontraditional registered nurse program to use nurse preceptors for their clinical experience. The preceptor's two years of experience must be in the same type of practice setting as the preceptorship. Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers are covered by the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will eliminate licensure requirements that may be viewed as barriers to entering certain health care professions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Ron Weaver, Department of Health.