

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2788

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 25, 2004

Title: An act relating to the liability insurance program for retired primary care providers volunteering to serve low-income patients.

Brief Description: Establishing priority for funds in the liability insurance program for retired primary care providers volunteering to serve low-income patients.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Kessler, Schual-Berke, Cody, Morrell, Clibborn, Campbell, Moeller, Darneille, Buck and Kagi).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/24/04, 2/25/04 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: The Department of Health administers a program to purchase malpractice insurance for certain retired primary health care providers who volunteer their services at community clinics. In order to qualify, the provider must be a physician, naturopath, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, dentist, or other health care provider whose profession is determined to be in short supply. Providers may only perform primary health care services which are limited to noninvasive procedures and do not include obstetrical care, or any specialized care or treatment. Providers may only practice at community clinics that are public or private nonprofit organizations.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health's retired liability insurance purchasing program is broadened to be available to volunteers at any clinic serving low-income patients that is a public entity, private nonprofit corporation, or other established practice setting as defined by the Department of Health. If program funding does not cover all applicants, priority is given to providers practicing at public or nonprofit entities.

The definition of a primary care provider is broadened to include specialists practicing in a primary care capacity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: By providing medical malpractice insurance, this bill would encourage people to volunteer.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Patricia Hannah, United Way of Clallam County; Steve Albecht, MD, Thurston Mason Medical Society; Ron Weaver, Dept. of Health; Ruth Sheaner, Bread and Roses.