

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 6193

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to health professions work force supply and demographics information.

Brief Description: Requiring surveys of health professions work force supply and demographics.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Regala, Keiser, Eide, Prentice, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Fairley, McAuliffe, Fraser, Brown, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Parlette and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/21/06, 2/23/06 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Requires the Department of Health to send surveys to health care providers to gather data about the health care work force.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Bailey, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Condotta.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (Department) regulates 57 health care professions. Currently, over 290,000 people hold a health care provider credential issued by the Department. Of those, approximately 170,000 are licensed health care providers.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent to which there is a shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing the number of providers. In its 2002 report,

the task force noted that there were shortages of health care professionals in several professions including dental hygienists, dentists, medical aides, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and radiology technologists. One of the recommendations of the task force was to "develop a data collection and analysis system to assess health workforce supply and demand."

In 2004, the Legislature created the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities (Committee) through the adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419. The Committee issued a report on health disparities in Washington on November 1, 2005. The report contained several recommendations and findings for the Legislature's consideration. Among the Committee's recommendations was to identify and collect "relevant and accurate data on health care professionals" as one way to reduce health disparities.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department shall gather data related to the supply of health care providers and demographics of the health care work force through surveys that will be sent every two years to licensed health care providers. In developing the surveys, the Department shall collaborate with the Board and seek advice from researchers who are likely to use the information.

At a minimum, the surveys must include questions related to:

- specialty;
- gender;
- age;
- race and ethnicity;
- hours in practice per week;
- practice statistics;
- zip codes of the provider's practice;
- years and locations where the provider has practiced;
- education and training and where the education and training was received; and
- types of facilities where the provider practices.

The Department may approve proposals to distribute surveys requesting additional data to individual professions if: (1) there is a legitimate research interest; (2) the burden on license holders is not unreasonable; (3) the effect on survey response rates is not unreasonable; and (4) funds are available. The Department may accept funds from other entities to support the enhanced surveys.

Data elements from the surveys are confidential and exempt from public disclosure, unless they are released for study and analysis pursuant to a data sharing agreement. The Department shall make a public data set available that maintains the confidentiality of individual health care providers.

The failure to complete a survey may not be grounds for disciplinary action against a health care provider.

By July 1, 2009, the Department must report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of using a survey to obtain information on the supply of health professionals; the distribution and use of the information; and the extent that the surveys have relieved shortages.

The act expires on January 1, 2012.

Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill:

The amended bill requires the survey to be conducted every two years instead of periodically. When developing the survey, the Department is required to seek advice from researchers who are likely to use the information.

Gender, multiple zip codes of practice locations, and education and training background are added to the list of minimum elements on the surveys.

The Department is required to report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the survey program by July 1, 2009.

The program expires on January 1, 2012.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for section 1 relating to legislative findings, which takes effect July 1, 2006.

Testimony For: (In support) Washington must prepare for the state's changing demographics. This is part of a complete package that speaks to the complete issue of health disparities.

(Comments) Surveying health care providers is vital to assessing the supply of the health care workforce.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Franklin, prime sponsor.

(Comments) Maddy Thompson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.