

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5203

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As of January 25, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to membership of the Washington state medical quality assurance commission.

**Brief Description:** Including a holistic medicine practitioner on the Washington state medical quality assurance commission.

**Sponsors:** Senators Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Pflug and Roach.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/25/07.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) is responsible for the regulation of physicians and physician assistants by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing qualifications for licensing, practice and discipline. The Commission consists of 21 members. Thirteen members must be licensed to practice medicine in Washington State, two members must be licensed as physician assistants, and six must be members of the public. All Commission members are appointed by the Governor and serve staggered terms. The Commission may appoint a panel of three members for case review.

According to the American Board of Holistic Medicine, holistic medicine is the art and science of healing that addresses care of the whole person - body, mind, and spirit. Holistic medicine integrates conventional and complementary therapies to promote optimal health and prevent and treat disease. A holistic practitioner may utilize conventional medical therapies as well as alternative therapies such as herbal medicine, relaxation and stress management, nutrition, and acupuncture.

**Summary of Bill:** At least one member of the Commission who is a physician must practice in the area of holistic medicine and be certified by the American Board of Holistic Medicine.

If a panel is reviewing a case involving a holistic medicine practitioner, at least one member of the panel must be a practitioner of holistic medicine.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Holistic practitioners feel they are being picked on and dealt with unfairly because Commission members don't have their background. Citizens who use alternative medical care providers need support from the medical board, especially for those who are dealing with the potential effect of toxins and complex conditions such as autism. Legislators should support citizen choice and competition in the health care field.

CON: Holistic doctors are not a recognized specialty in Washington State. The Commission already consults with specialty providers on cases where they don't have expertise. Requiring a holistic doctor to sit on the Commission does not solve the problem.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Jerome Delvin, prime sponsor; Denise Fulton, Autism Research Institute; Ann Clifton, Mercury Awareness Team.

CON: Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.