

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1765

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 23, 2009

Title: An act relating to the license surcharge for the impaired physician program.

Brief Description: Concerning the license surcharge for the impaired physician program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Moeller, Campbell and Morrell).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/09, 91-6.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/19/09, 3/23/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) operates, by contract, an impaired physician program in which both physicians and physician assistants may participate.

The Department of Health is authorized to include the following in the program:

- entering into relationships with professionals who provide either evaluation or treatment services;
- receiving and assessing reports of suspected impairment;
- intervening in cases of verified impairment, or in cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect impairment;
- referring impaired physicians or physician assistants for evaluation or treatment;
- monitoring the treatment and rehabilitation of impaired physicians and physician assistants;
- providing monitoring, continuing treatment, and rehabilitative support;
- providing prevention and education services; and
- providing other activities as agreed by the MQAC and the contracting entity.

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.

As part of their annual fees, physicians and physician assistants are assessed a surcharge to fund this program of \$35 for physicians and \$25 for physician assistants. The surcharge is deposited into the Impaired Physician Account to be used solely for the implementation of the impaired physician program.

Summary of Bill: The MQAC is required to increase the surcharge for the impaired physician program to \$50. All funds in the Impaired Physician Account must be paid to the contract entity within 60 days of deposit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

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: This bill saves physician's lives and saves patients' lives. There has been a 43 percent increase in activity in referring physicians to our program because under SHB 2974 there is a reporting requirement. When that law was passed, there was no money attached to it to fund the likely increase in referrals. This bill will close that gap. This is a helpful program, everyone benefits.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Moeller, prime sponsor; Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association; Dr. Mick Oreskovich, Medical Director and CEO of the Washington Physicians Health Program.