

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 6582

C 169 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning nursing assistant credentialing.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Roach, Zarelli, Prentice and Kilmer).

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care
House Committee on Health Care & Wellness

Background: The Legislature currently recognizes the growing need for competent nursing assistants in health care facilities. The growth of the elderly population, and sicker patients in hospitals and nursing homes, combined with the high turnover of health care workers who can provide for basic needs of patients creates a challenge to meet staffing needs in health care facilities. The Legislature also recognizes that there should be a system which provides career mobility and advancement opportunities for nursing assistants. Such a system can provide for a stable workforce and be a resource for recruitment into the licensed nursing practice.

The Secretary of the Department of Health (secretary) issues certificates for nursing assistants. Applicants must complete an approved training program or alternate training approved by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (commission) which meets criteria approved by the commission. The secretary can permit training hours earned by long-term care workers to be applied toward certification. Applicants must also complete a competency evaluation and can be denied certification under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Summary: In addition to recognizing the value of career mobility and advancement for nursing assistants, the Legislature recognizes the value of certified home-care aides and medical assistants as a potential source of nursing assistants. Nursing assistant training programs should recognize the relevant training and experience obtained by these credentialed professionals.

The commission must adopt criteria to evaluate an applicant's alternative training to determine eligibility to take the competency evaluation for nursing assistant certification. The commission must adopt at least one option to allow a certified home-care aide or a certified medical assistant to take the exam if the applicant has 24 hours of training that the commission determines is equivalent to approved training on topics not addressed in the training required for home-care aide or medical assistant.

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.

Rules must be developed by the commission by July 1, 2011, in consultation with the secretary, the Department of Social and Health Services, and representatives of consumers, employers, and workers.

Approved training programs and alternative training must comply with federal requirement under 42 U.S. C. Sec. 1395i-3(e). Clarification is provided to ensure compliance with federal requirements for hiring certified nursing assistants in nursing facilities. For those enrolled in an approved training program, such certification must be accomplished within four months of employment. For those completing an alternative training, such certification must be completed prior to employment.

The secretary is to report annually beginning December 1, 2012, to the Governor and the Legislature on progress made in achieving career advancement for certified home-care aides and medical assistants into nursing practice.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	67	29	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010