

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6811

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 4, 2010

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington state board of naturopathy.

Brief Description: Concerning naturopathy.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser and Pflug.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/01/10, 2/04/10 [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: Naturopathic medicine practice involves diagnosing, treating, and preventing physical disorders by stimulating or supporting the natural processes of the human body. This practice can involve the use of nutrition, physical modalities, homeopathy, and naturopathic medicines. A naturopath must be licensed to practice naturopathy in this state. The Secretary of the Department of Health (Secretary) issues licenses to applicants who successfully complete an approved educational program or its equivalent, pass an exam, possess good moral character and have not engaged in unprofessional conduct. The Secretary establishes the standards for education programs and alternatives, as well as examination, licensure and discipline of naturopaths.

Summary of Bill: A seven member board of naturopathy is created. Members are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year terms. Five members of the board must be licensed naturopaths, and two members must be from the public. The board is responsible for setting minimum education and experience requirements, preparing and administering examinations, and determining whether alternative methods of training are equivalent to formal education for eligibility to take the exam. The board serves as the disciplinary authority and is authorized to adopt rules to administer the chapter.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Citizens want alternatives to other forms of health care. Naturopaths are primary care providers. We are the only primary care providers without our own board. Costs for doing the work of the board would be paid for by the professionals licensed to practice.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Bob May, N.D. Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians.