
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2578

Brief Description: Concerning disciplinary actions against the health professions license of the subject of a department of social and health services finding.

Sponsors: Representative Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health or health professions board or commission to summarily suspend the license of any health care provider who has been disqualified from unsupervised access to vulnerable adults by the Department of Social and Health Services.

Hearing Date: 1/25/12

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Department of Social and Health Services Investigations.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must initiate investigations upon the report of abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation, and financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult. If the initial report to the DSHS or its investigation shows that the conduct may have been criminal, the DSHS must immediately report the information to law enforcement. In addition, when a report or investigation involves a licensed health care provider, the DSHS must notify the relevant disciplining authority.

In several instances facilities and agencies licensed by or contracting with the DSHS are prohibited from allowing any person associated with the entity to have unsupervised access to a vulnerable adult if the person has been found to have engaged in the abuse, abandonment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. These requirements generally apply to nursing homes, boarding homes, and adult family homes. In addition, agencies and facilities providing services, housing, or care for vulnerable adults may not allow unsupervised access to vulnerable

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adults to people who are the subject of a protective order or who have been convicted of certain crimes or found by an administrative decision to have abused a vulnerable adult.

Investigations of Health Care Providers.

The Department of Health and the 15 health professions boards and commissions (disciplining authorities) have regulatory authority over their respective health professions, including issuing licenses, administering investigations, and conducting disciplinary hearings. A disciplining authority may take emergency action against a credentialed health care provider by summarily suspending the person's credential. In cases in which a credentialed health care provider is prohibited from practicing in another state, the disciplining authority in Washington must issue a summary suspension until the disciplinary proceedings in Washington have been completed.

Summary of Bill:

Any credentialed health care provider or applicant for a health professions credential who has been disqualified from having unsupervised access to vulnerable adults by a final order of the Department of Social and Health Services, is prohibited from practicing his or her profession until the Department of Health or appropriate health professions board or commission has completed its disciplinary proceedings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2012.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2013.