

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5443

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As of February 10, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to encouraging training for medical students, nurses, and medical technicians and assistants to work with adult patients with developmental disabilities.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the higher education coordinating board to develop a grant program to encourage training for students studying in the medical field to work with individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Sponsors:** Senators Chase, Shin, McAuliffe and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/08/11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

**Background:** Washington has about eight baccalaureate nursing programs and about 28 associate degree nursing programs. In addition, the University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine provides publicly supported medical education to students studying and training to become medical doctors. The UW School of Medicine is responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of its curriculum.

Some research suggests that people with disabilities have difficulty accessing health care that meets their unique needs. For example, a 2007 report from the Surgeon General recommended expanding training for health care professionals that focuses on the health care and wellness needs of people with disabilities.

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is a citizen board that administers the student financial aid programs and provides strategic planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for the state's public colleges and universities.

**Summary of Bill:** Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this purpose, medical students at the UW, nursing students at Washington schools of nursing, and special and technical care students at Washington technical schools would benefit from specialized training and exposure to the unique care needs for adults that are developmentally disabled.

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The HECB must develop a centralized grant program for institutions with programs that focus on training which improves services to adult individuals with developmental disabilities. The HECB must administer the grant program in consultation with the Department of Health.

By December 1, 2011, the HECB must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature. The report must include information on grants awarded and any other efforts or progress in expanding or improving training for students in treating adult individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: The health and wellness of disabled citizens is addressed in this bill. Nurses are thrilled with the possibility of getting this bill passed into law. Disabilities are a genetic condition and are not an illness that people can be cured from. We as a society can make accommodations for these citizens to live in the least restrictive environment possible. We need to be able to provide a continuum of care to various levels of disabilities. We continually see the lack of education that medical professionals need to take care of this population. It is vital to have hands-on experience in order to treat people with disabilities with the dignity and respect they deserve. Training is desperately needed.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Chase, prime sponsor; Maureen Durkan, Action for the Developmental Disabilities (DD); Jean Barrett, Action DD, Support Our Residential Habilitation Centers.