

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1629

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health Care, March 21, 2013

Title: An act relating to eliminating barriers to credentialing and continuing education as a home care aide.

Brief Description: Concerning credentialing and continuing education requirements for long-term care workers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Schmick, Jinkins, Tharinger, Green, Pollet, Morrell, Santos and Ryu).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/13, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 3/18/13, 3/21/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Keiser, Ranking Member; Bailey, Cleveland, Ericksen, Frockt, Parlette and Schlicher.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: A long-term care worker is any person who provides paid, hands-on personal care services for the elderly or persons with disabilities. The term includes individual providers of home care services, direct care workers employed by home care agencies, providers of home care services to people with developmental disabilities, direct care workers in assisted-living facilities and adult family homes, and respite care providers. The term does not include employees of nursing homes, hospitals, acute care settings, residential habilitation centers, hospice agencies, adult day care centers, and adult day health centers. The term also excludes people who are not paid by the state or any private agency or facility licensed by the state to provide personal care services.

Long-term care workers must become certified home care aides unless an exemption applies. Exempt individuals include registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, home health aides, long-term care workers employed by community residential service businesses, and individual providers caring for only their biological, step, or adoptive child or parent. In many cases, individuals who are exempt from home care aide certification

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must still meet specific training requirements in order to provide caregiver activities. Long-term care workers must be certified as home care aides within 150 days after the date of hire. To become certified as a home care aide, a long-term care worker must complete 75 hours of training, pass a certification examination, and pass state and federal background checks. Long-term care workers may work once they complete five hours of safety and orientation training. Long-term care workers who have not received home care aide certification within 150 days from the date of hire are prohibited from working.

Summary of Bill: The time that a long-term care worker has to become a certified home care aide is increased from 150 to 200 days after the date of hire. A provisional certification is established for long-term care workers who are limited in English proficiency and have complied with all other home care aide certification requirements. The provisional certification provides the long-term care worker with an additional 60 days to become certified as a home care aide. The provisional certification program expires on July 1, 2016.

Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are exempt from the continuing education training required for long-term care workers. Caregivers in adult family homes must practice under direct supervision, rather than indirect supervision, prior to demonstrating competence in basic training.

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: We are supportive of improving the training for the long-term workforce and the standards in the bill are the result of a long stakeholder process. The bill brings three fixes that have no fiscal impact.

CON: The costs of training makes it difficult to get trained staff. It is hard to meet those costs and run a business.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Misha Werschkul, Service Employees International Union, Healthcare #775NW; Vicki McNeally, WA State Residential Care Council; Bill Moss, Dept. of Social and Health Services.

CON: Bernadette McBride, Legacy Homes and Tranquility Manors.