

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5177

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to requiring long-term care workers to be trained to recognize hearing loss.

Brief Description: Requiring long-term care workers to be trained to recognize hearing loss.

Sponsors: Senators Bailey, Keiser, Palumbo and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/10/17, 3/15/17 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by Committee)

- Requires training in the identification of individuals with potential hearing loss to be a component of population specific competencies for long-term care workers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Graves, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Clibborn, DeBolt, Harris, Jinkins, MacEwen, Maycumber, Riccelli, Robinson, Rodne, Slatter, Stonier and Tharinger.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

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,

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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 complete 75 hours of entry-level training within 120 days of being hired. These training requirements include 2 hours of orientation training, 3 hours of safety training, and 70 hours of long-term care basic training related to core competencies and population-specific competencies.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The population specific competencies to be covered in the 70 hours of basic training for long-term care workers must include training in the identification of individuals with potential hearing loss and how to seek assistance for clients with suspected hearing loss.

References to expired standards for certification and exemptions from training requirements are removed.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill requires that population specific competencies cover the identification of individuals with potential hearing loss, rather than the identification of hearing loss in a client.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Hearing loss is a significant problem and caregivers cannot provide their best care if communication with a client is inhibited. Training long-term care workers on the warning signs of hearing loss could allow them to help since they have more contact with a client than other health care providers. This bill is a modest step toward supporting care for Washington's seniors. It is important to raise awareness about hearing loss for senior citizens and residents of long-term care facilities. Alternative measures for raising awareness should also be considered such as informational posters, self-study packets, and continuing education options.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Demas Nesterenko, Service Employees International Union 775; and Dave Knutson, Washington Health Care Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.