
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5228

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Lias, Das, Lovelett, Nobles, Wilson, C., Darneille, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Nguyen, and Robinson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing disproportionate health outcomes by
2 building a foundation of equity in medical training; adding new
3 sections to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that inequities in
6 health outcomes exist in the state of Washington and that future
7 generations of health care professionals have an important role to
8 play in mitigating these disparate outcomes. Because the schools of
9 medicine at the University of Washington and Washington State
10 University are tasked with the formative role of educating medical
11 professionals, the legislature sees fit to ensure students leaving
12 these institutions are prepared to care effectively for the people of
13 diverse cultures, groups, and communities that will become their
14 patients. By equipping them with the tools to serve diverse
15 communities around our state and our nation, students of medicine
16 will become practitioners of medicine with the knowledge, attitudes,
17 and skills to understand and counteract racism and implicit bias in
18 health care. The purpose of this act is to serve medical students,
19 medical professionals, and patients in communities in which these
20 professionals work, and to undo structural racism in the systems
21 through which they navigate. To that end, this act establishes

1 opportunities for education that provide tools to students of
2 medicine to build a better, more equitable health care system.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) Within existing resources, by January 1, 2023, the school of
6 medicine at the University of Washington, established under chapter
7 28B.20 RCW, and the school of medicine at Washington State
8 University, established under chapter 28B.30 RCW, shall each develop
9 curriculum on health equity for medical students. The curriculum must
10 teach attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable students to care
11 effectively for patients from diverse cultures, groups, and
12 communities. The objectives of the curriculum must be to provide
13 tools for eliminating structural racism in health care systems and to
14 build cultural safety. A person may not graduate with a degree from
15 either medical school without completing a course, or courses, that
16 include curriculum on health equity for medical students.

17 (2) Course topics on health equity may include, but are not
18 limited to:

19 (a) Strategies for recognizing patterns of health care
20 disparities and eliminating factors that influence them;

21 (b) Intercultural communication skills training, including how to
22 work effectively with an interpreter and how communication styles
23 differ across cultures;

24 (c) Historical examples of medical and public health racism and
25 how racism may manifest itself in a student's field of medicine;

26 (d) Cultural safety training that requires examination of each
27 student's culture and potential impacts on clinical interactions and
28 health care service delivery;

29 (e) Structural competency training that gives attention to forces
30 influencing health outcomes at levels above individual interactions;

31 (f) Methods of evaluating health care systems; and

32 (g) Implicit bias training to identify strategies to reduce bias
33 during assessment and diagnosis.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 (1) Within existing resources, by January 1, 2022, the school of
37 medicine at the University of Washington, established under chapter
38 28B.20 RCW, and the school of medicine at Washington State

1 University, established under chapter 28B.30 RCW, shall each develop
2 a goal focused on increasing the number of underrepresented students
3 at each school of medicine, guided by the state of Washington's need
4 for physicians from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and each
5 school's predominant equity goals. In developing the goal, special
6 consideration may be given to students attending the school of
7 medicine at the University of Washington as a part of a regional
8 partnership with other states. Each initial goal shall be set for
9 January 1, 2025.

10 (2) The school of medicine at the University of Washington and
11 the school of medicine at Washington State University shall report
12 progress towards their goal on an annual basis through their public
13 websites.

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