

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2339

As Reported by House Committee On:
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Title: An act relating to certification renewal for home care aides and nursing assistants.

Brief Description: Adjusting certification renewal for home care aides and nursing assistants.

Sponsors: Representatives Chambers, Riccelli, Schmick and Bateman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 1/24/24, 1/26/24 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires home care aide certifications to be renewed every two years.
- Requires nursing assistant credentials to be renewed every two years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Jacobsen, Klicker, McEntire, Nance, Paul, Pollet, Schmidt and Timmons.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Leavitt.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Long-Term Care Workers and Home Care Aides.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A long-term care worker is any person who provides paid, hands-on personal care services for the elderly or persons with disabilities, including 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. Most long-term care workers must become certified as home care aides within 200 days of being hired. To become certified as a home care aide, a long-term care worker must complete 75 hours of training, pass state and federal background checks, and pass an examination.

The Department of Health (Department) is authorized to adopt rules to establish criteria for licensing. Current rules adopted by the Department require home care aides to renew certification every year.

Nursing Assistants.

A nursing assistant is a person who assists in providing nursing and nursing-related activities to patients in a health care facility under the supervision of a registered nurse. There are two levels of nursing assistants: certified nursing assistants and registered nursing assistants. Nursing assistants must graduate from a nursing assistant program, pass a criminal background check, and pass an examination.

The Board of Nursing (Board) is authorized to adopt rules relating to competency and other provisions for nursing assistants. Current rules adopted by the Board require nursing assistants to renew credentials every year.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning January 1, 2025, certifications for home care aides and credentials for nursing assistants must be renewed every two years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The implementation of the two-year renewal cycle is delayed until January 1, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is a continuation from policy last year. House Bill 1568 from the 2023 Legislative Session had a number of provisions to help alleviate the workforce shortage. The piece about renewing licenses every two years was left out of the policies from last year. Extending the licensing period gives workers more bang for their buck. Some people are kept out of the workforce due to the cost of having to renew their certification every year. Having shortages of caregivers means that patients cannot discharge in a timely manner. It takes a heart of service to do this challenging work. If the agencies double the cost of renewal, the bill should not be moved forward.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The long-term care workforce is in crisis. There is a shortage across the country and there is a need to attract and retain high quality workers. The cost of renewal recently increased. There is concern that doubling the cost over two years could have negative implications. The Washington Administrative Code and statute determine whether or not a caregiver is eligible to work. Each adjustment requires changes in rules and can lead to substantial unbudgeted requirements. This could lead to a financial burden.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kelly Chambers, prime sponsor; and Amina Abdall, Adult Family Home Council.

(Other) Mallory Hagel, Service Employees International Union 775 Benefits Group.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.