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**SENATE BILL 5242**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Orwall, Harris, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Nobles, Shewmake, Valdez, and C. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to establishing an interactive screening program to improve access to behavioral health resources for health care providers; and adding new sections to chapter 43.70 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall contract with a nonprofit entity to establish an interactive program to improve access to behavioral health resources for health care providers. The program must:

(a) Be evidence-based;

(b) Be available to any individual holding a professional credential subject to chapter 18.130 RCW;

(c) Utilize a screening questionnaire, the results of which are to be reviewed by a counselor to triage the user's level of distress;

(d) Allow the user to remain anonymous;

(e) Provide services which are completely confidential;

(f) Allow the user to interact with the counselor via email or receive a referral for treatment; and

(g) Include facilitation of paid medical leave requests for mental health conditions related to or exacerbated by clinician distress and burnout.

(2) The costs of the program must be financed by an annual surcharge added to the licensing fee for every licensed health professional subject to chapter 18.130 RCW. The amount of the surcharge must be uniform across professions and set by the secretary in rule. The surcharges must be placed in the interactive screening program account created in section 2 of this act to be used solely to support the program established in this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

The interactive screening program account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from surcharges collected under section 1 of this act must be deposited into the account. Expenditures from the account may be used only for support of the program established in section 1 of this act. Only the secretary or the secretary's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

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