
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1228

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.

SUMMARY

This bill addresses various issues related to health care credentialing and competency testing, the health care workforce, and related issues. Regarding testing, it:

1. requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to notify each applicant taking an examination for DPH licensure, certification, or registration that they may be eligible for testing accommodations under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
2. requires the dental hygienist written and practical licensure examinations to be offered in Spanish as well as English starting in 2024; and
3. provides an alternate way for dental assistants to qualify to take dental x-rays, by passing a competency assessment rather than a national exam, and requires UConn's School of Dental Medicine to develop the assessment by January 1, 2025.

The bill also requires various studies and related reports. Specifically, it requires:

1. the education commissioner, in consultation with the labor and DPH commissioners, to study the feasibility of establishing an interdistrict magnet school program focused on training students for health care professions;
2. the DPH commissioner to study how to address the state's

shortage of radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, and respiratory care practitioners;

3. the DPH commissioner to study the feasibility of offering competency testing in both English and Spanish for dental assistants, phlebotomists, electrocardiography technicians, and respiratory care practitioners; and
4. the aging and disability services commissioner, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind, to evaluate gaps in these individuals' access to communication with medical providers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except (1) July 1, 2023, for the provisions on ADA accommodations and the dental hygienist examination and (2) October 1, 2023, for the provision on dental assistants' eligibility to take dental x-rays after passing the assessment.

§§ 7 & 8 — DENTAL ASSISTANTS

Existing law allows dentists to delegate certain procedures to dental assistants, under the dentist's direct supervision. Under current law, this includes dental x-rays, but only if the assistant has passed the Dental Assisting National Board's dental radiation health and safety exam.

The bill additionally allows dentists to delegate these procedures to dental assistants who have passed a radiation health and safety competency assessment. That assessment must be administered by an in-state dental education program accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation.

By January 1, 2025, the bill requires UConn's School of Dental Medicine to (1) develop this competency assessment, reflecting current industry practices on dental x-rays, and (2) report on its development to the Public Health Committee.

§ 1 — INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL STUDY

The bill requires the education commissioner, in consultation with

the labor and DPH commissioners, to study the feasibility of creating an interdistrict magnet school program to educate and train students interested in health care professions. This must include pathways for students to (1) graduate with a certification, license, or registration allowing them to practice in a health care field and (2) complete a curriculum designed to prepare them for pre-medicine or nursing higher education programs.

By February 1, 2024, the education commissioner must report on the study to the Public Health Committee.

§ 2 — PROVIDER SHORTAGE STUDY

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to study the shortage of radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, and respiratory care practitioners in the state, and develop a plan to address it. By February 1, 2024, she must report on the study's results to the Public Health Committee.

§ 5 — SPANISH LANGUAGE TESTING STUDY

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to study the feasibility of offering competency testing in both Spanish and English for dental assistants, phlebotomists, electrocardiography technicians, and respiratory care practitioners. By February 1, 2024, she must report on the study to the Public Health Committee.

§ 6 — COMMUNICATION ACCESS STUDY

The bill requires the aging and disability services commissioner, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind, to (1) conduct a study evaluating gaps in these individuals' access to communication with medical providers and (2) develop recommendations to improve this access. By October 1, 2023, she must report on the study to the Aging, Human Services, and Public Health committees.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sSB 9, reported favorably by the Public Health Committee, (1)

requires the education commissioner to establish a Health Care Career Advisory Council to advise on developing a health career program, including promoting these career options to, and giving shadowing and internship opportunities for, students (§ 9), and (2) requires DPH to offer nurse's aide competency tests in both Spanish and English (§ 13).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/27/2023)