
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1972

Brief Description: Increasing the licensure fees that support the Washington physicians health program.

Sponsors: Representatives Simmons and Harris.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Raises surcharge fees for the Washington Physician Health Program for physicians, osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, dentists, physician assistants, and veterinarians.

Hearing Date: 1/9/24

Staff: Benjamin Ratcliff (786-7291) and Jim Morishima (786-7191)

Background:

Washington Physicians Health Program.

If a disciplining authority determines that unprofessional conduct by a licensee may be the result of an applicable impairing or potentially impairing health condition, the disciplining authority may refer the licensee to a physician health program or a voluntary substance use disorder monitoring program approved by the disciplining authority in lieu of disciplinary action. If the licensee does not consent to the referral or fails to meet the requirements of the program, the disciplining authority may take formal disciplinary action against the licensee.

The Washington Medical Commission, the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, the Dental Quality Assurance Commission, the Podiatric Medical Board, and the State Veterinarian Board of Governors all contract with the same entity to implement their physician health program. The entity does not itself provide treatment but provides services such as referring

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practitioners to treatment programs and monitoring compliance.

Costs/Fees.

Physician Health Program costs are financed primarily by surcharges on license issuances and renewals. For physicians, osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, dentists, and physician assistants, the fee is up to \$50. For veterinarians, the fee is up to \$25.

Summary of Bill:

The license surcharge limit for the Physician Health Program of \$50 for physicians, osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, dentists, and physician assistants is raised to no more than \$70. The surcharge limit of \$25 for veterinarians is raised to no more than \$35.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 3, 2024.

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