



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



BILL ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 4670 (Substitute H-2 as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Gary A. Newell
House Committee: Health Policy
Senate Committee: Health Policy

Date Completed: 1-25-06

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Public Health Code to allow a retired physician to obtain a volunteer license to treat indigent and needy individuals, or those in medically underserved areas.

Specifically, an individual who was retired from the active practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery, and who wished to donate his or her expertise for the medical care and treatment of indigent and needy individuals or individuals in underserved areas of the State, could obtain a special volunteer license to engage in the practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery by submitting an application to the applicable board.

An application would have to be on a form provided by the Department of Community Health and would have to include each of the following:

- Documentation that the individual previously had been licensed to engage in the practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery in Michigan and that his or her license was in good standing before its expiration.
- Acknowledgment and documentation that the applicant would not receive any payment or compensation, either direct or indirect, or have the expectation of any compensation, for any medical care services provided under the special volunteer license.
- If the applicant had been out of practice for at least three years, documentation that, during the three years immediately preceding the application, he or she had attended at least two-thirds of the continuing education courses or programs required under Part 170 (Medicine) or 175 (Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery) for license renewal.

If the applicable board determined that the application satisfied the bill's requirements and that the individual met the requirements for a license prescribed in Article 15 (Occupations) and rules promulgated under Article 15, the board would have to grant the license to the applicant. A licensee seeking renewal of a volunteer license would have to give the board an updated acknowledgment and documentation that he or she would not receive or expect to receive any payment or compensation. The board could not charge a fee for the issuance or renewal of a special volunteer license.

Except as otherwise provided under the bill, a physician who was granted a special volunteer license and who accepted the privilege of practicing medicine in Michigan would be subject to all of the provisions of Article 15, including those concerning continuing education and disciplinary action.

For the purposes of the bill, an individual would be considered retired from practice if his or her license had expired with his or her intention of ceasing to engage in the practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery for remuneration.

Proposed MCL 333.16184

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

FISCAL IMPACT

The State would incur additional administrative cost creating the special volunteer license mandated by this bill and processing additional license applications. Unlike other medical licensure programs, the bill would prohibit the Department from charging an application fee that could offset some of these costs.

Permitting retired medical professionals to donate their services in medically underserved areas would likely increase the number of health care options available to low income and uninsured individuals in these regions. This could lead to a slight decrease in fee-for-service Medicaid cost for the State and reduce the amount of uncompensated care provided by public medical facilities located in medically underserved communities.

Fiscal Analyst: David Fosdick

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.