

Legislative Analysis



CANADIAN NURSES: ELIMINATE SUNSET

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House Bill 4941 reported without amendment

Sponsor: Rep. Gail Haines

Committee: Health Policy

Complete to 11-4-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4941 AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE 10-29-13

A provision in the Public Health Code allowing the Michigan Board of Nursing to grant temporary licenses for Canadian nurses to practice within the state while awaiting state certification expired January 1, 2012. House Bill 4941 would amend the Public Health Code to eliminate that sunset date, thus restoring the board's ability to grant the temporary licenses.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4941 would have a nominal negative fiscal impact on the Bureau of Health Care Services (BHCS) within the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA): nominal because the number of Canadian nurses seeking temporary licensure while awaiting certification in Michigan is likely small; negative because the \$10 fee for temporary licensure is insufficient to cover the BHCS' costs to administer temporary licensure.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Public Act 256 of 2000 (enrolled Senate Bill 1224) allowed Canadian nurses to apply for a temporary license to practice as a registered professional nurse (RPN) while undergoing the process of certification in Michigan. Apparently, the certification process, which includes waiting for the next scheduled NCLEX examination (known as the board exam), can be lengthy. In light of the ongoing shortage of nurses in the state, and considering that the training and licensure requirements of U.S. and Canadian nurses are similar, PA 256 has enabled Michigan hospitals to alleviate nursing shortages and thus improve patient care. However, this provision expired January 1, 2012. Eliminating the sunset would allow the Michigan Board of Nursing to grant a temporary license to a Canadian nurse whenever the need warrants. According to departmental staff, the program has worked well and there is no administrative burden to LARA.

POSITIONS:

A representative of the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs testified in support of the bill. (10-22-13)

The Michigan Health and Hospital Association indicated support for the bill. (10-29-13)

Legislative Analyst: Susan Stutzky

Fiscal Analyst: Paul Holland

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