

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2849

C 271 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying nursing home administrator licensing.

Sponsors: Representatives Dyer, Cody, Casada, Conway, Hymes, Murray, Skinner, Morris, Crouse, Sherstad, Backlund, H. Sommers and Silver.

House Committee on Health Care
Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

Background: The Christian Science churches in Washington maintain over 60 congregations. Christian Scientists believe that health care is effected through prayer. Spiritual treatment is relied upon as the most effective healing method, and Christian Scientists generally choose to rely on spiritual means alone for their care.

Christian Scientists have nursing home facilities for persons relying on Christian Science spiritual treatment, but whose basic physical needs cannot be met at home. The physical care provided in a Christian Science nursing home is non-medical and non-invasive, consisting of assistance with feeding, grooming, and providing general comfort. The only remedial treatment furnished is prayer or spiritual treatment in accordance with the Christian Science faith.

There is one Christian Science nursing home facility in Washington. It is licensed as a nursing home. This nursing home, however, is exempt by statute from state supervision, regulation, or control of the remedial care or treatment of patients. The Christian Science nursing home receives Medicare and Medicaid funds. All nursing homes, including Christian Science facilities, must have a full-time, on-site, licensed administrator. The administrator may be granted a limited license to administer a facility such as the Christian Science nursing home, without meeting the requirements for medical training, education, or background normally required of nursing home administrators. The Christian Science facility must be certified by the Christian Science church.

The Christian Science church has decided not to maintain the certification program due to a belief that such administrative functions are inconsistent with its ecclesiastical mission. A Commission for Accreditation of Christian Science Nursing Organizations/Facilities has been chosen to replace the certification program. Because of this change in church procedures transferring certification to accreditation, the only Christian Science nursing home facility in Washington could be required to remove its current administrator.

Summary: Nursing homes that specifically provide care and healing for its residents through prayer and spiritual means are no longer required to have a church or denominational certification program as long as they comply with any other federal requirements. A limited license may be granted to applicants who work as administrators in nursing home facilities that rely upon treatment by prayer or spiritual means in accordance with the creed of any well recognized church or religious denomination.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 6, 1996