

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS DISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES WORKLOAD MODEL REVIEW

## SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

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STATE OF WASHINGTON  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND  
REVIEW COMMITTEE

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## Why a JLARC Review of the Health Professions Disciplinary Activities Workload Model?

In 2006, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 2974 which requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) and the Department of Health (DOH) to look at workload formulas for health professions disciplinary activities. In this study, JLARC will review the workload model and formulas DOH now uses to estimate the workload costs of carrying out its health professions disciplinary responsibilities.

## State Regulation of Health Professions

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health of people in Washington State. The regulation of health professions falls within that mission. A total of 70 health professions are regulated either by the Secretary of Health or by separate boards or commissions. DOH's Health Systems Quality Assurance Division and Adjudicative Service Unit provide staff support for the regulation of these professions. DOH estimates a cost of about \$28 million annually to regulate health professions. Fees and civil penalties paid by regulated health professionals pay for this regulatory function.

As one part of its regulatory role, DOH staff are responsible for various disciplinary activities. Department disciplinary activities include, but are not limited to, complaint intake, investigations, and administrative proceedings. The Department may receive complaints from a variety of filers related to regulated health professionals. Complaints of alleged unprofessional conduct can lead to investigations by disciplining authorities, which may result in a sanction, such as suspension of a license, a fine, or conditions on practicing the profession.

## A Workload Model for DOH Disciplinary Activities

As part of developing its biennial budget request, the Department of Health must estimate the cost of its health professions disciplinary activities. The 2006 legislation directed DOH to develop and use a formula for three biennial budget requests, beginning with the 2007-09 budget. As part of this effort, the legislation requires DOH to specify:

- 1) The number of, and cost of supporting, existing full-time employees designated as investigators and attorneys; and
- 2) The number of, and cost of supporting, additional full-time investigators and attorneys required to achieve a staffing level that is able to respond "promptly, competently, and appropriately" to the workload associated with health professions disciplinary activities (RCW 18.130.380(1)).

For its 2007-09 budget request, DOH developed a formula to estimate the workload cost of its health professions disciplinary activities. To support its 2009-11 budget request, the Department commissioned a workload study and the development of a workload model. That workload model and its supporting formulas are the focus of this JLARC study.

## Study Scope

JLARC will review the methodology used to estimate the health professions disciplinary activities workload and review the workload model formulas. The report will include a summary overview of the methodology, a description of the formulas and how the model works, and a discussion of how the Department of Health has used the model.

## Study Objectives

The study will focus on the following questions:

- 1) What are the statutory obligations related to health professions disciplinary authorities?
- 2) What methodology was used to estimate health professions disciplinary activities workload?
- 3) What are the formulas that drive the workload model, and how do they work?
- 4) Do the assumptions and data elements used in the workload model appropriately reflect the legislative directive in Substitute House Bill 2974 and the actual staff work conducted for health professions disciplinary activities?
- 5) How has the Department of Health used the health professions disciplinary activities workload model?

## Timeframe for the Study

Staff will present preliminary and final reports at the JLARC meetings in September and October 2009, respectively.

## JLARC Staff Contact for the Study

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