

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

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|----------------|---|
| Action: | Do Pass |
| Vote: | 5 - 0 - 0 |
| Yeas: | George, Monnes Anderson, Prozanski, Telfer, Rosenbaum |
| Nays: | 0 |
| Exc.: | 0 |
| Prepared By: | Jeremy Sarant, Administrator |
| Meeting Dates: | 3/11 |

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Changes role of Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) from authorizing vocational provider organizations, to requiring vocational provider organizations to register with DCBS. Allows insurers and self-insured employers to voluntarily extend temporary disability payments from 16 to 21 months for injured workers receiving vocational rehabilitation services without DCBS approval. Consolidates statutory language relating to appeal rights and procedures regarding vocational assistance disputes.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Adequacy of department oversight over vocational rehabilitation

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The Department of Consumer and Business Services' (DCBS) Workers' Compensation Division currently certifies individual vocational counselors and authorizes the provider organizations that hire them. Currently, both individual counselors and the providers are required to submit similar information to DCBS to obtain counselor certification and provider authorization. Provider organizations may only use certified vocational counselors; thus, the statutory requirement that organizations submit separate and duplicative information already provided by counselors is of little regulatory value. House Bill 2195 removes the statutory requirement for provider organizations to be authorized by DCBS, and instead simply requires providers to register with the department.

Current law allows a worker participating in a vocational training program to receive up to 16 months of temporary disability payments. If a training plan includes payments beyond the 16-month time period, DCBS must approve the extension, possibly delaying extended assistance benefits to the injured worker.

Under current law, appeal rights for vocational assistance are located in a statute unrelated to vocational assistance.