

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2462

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 20, 1998

Title: An act relating to the registration of surgical technologists.

Brief Description: Providing for the registration of surgical technologists.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Backlund, Dyer and Anderson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/20/98 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Franklin, Strannigan and Wojahn.

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: Surgical technologists are nonregulated personnel principally employed by hospitals as part of the operating room team which works under the supervision of surgeons to perform certain tasks commonly referred to as "second assisting" or the "scrub" role.

Some are employed by ambulatory surgery centers, or private physician operating suites. The scrub role includes a variety of tasks assuring the physical preparation of the operating room and preparation of basic sterile packs and trays, generally creating the sterile field during operative procedures. In comparison, "first assisting" implies more advanced tasks such as closing sutures, stapling, assisting with bleeding vessels, or other duties the surgeon may delegate to physicians, nurses or physician assistants.

Summary of Bill: There is a declaration of legislative intent that the registration of surgical technologists is necessary for the protection of public health and safety.

Individuals performing surgical technology and representing themselves as surgical technologists are required to register with the Department of Health, and the Secretary of Health must issue a registration to applicants on forms provided by the secretary.

Registered surgical technologists are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act, and the secretary is the disciplining authority.

The activities and duties of surgical technologists in the surgical setting are determined by the secretary by rule in consultation with the Medical Quality Assurance Commission, Nursing Quality Assurance Commission, and Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1999.

Testimony For: This bill is a negotiated, agreed upon bill with support by interested parties. Nurses would have supervision. Surgical technologists would be covered under the Uniform Disciplinary Act, which protects the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jan Olmsted, STOWS (pro); Tamara Warnke, Washington State Nurses (pro).