

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6439

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 06, 2008

Title: An act relating to radiologist assistants.

Brief Description: Concerning radiologist assistants.

Sponsors: Senators Spanel and Berkey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/30/08, 2/06/08 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6439 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Fairley, Kastama, Kohl-Welles and Marr.

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

Background: Radiology assistants are not regulated in Washington State. Currently, three categories of professionals working in the field of radiologic technology are certified: diagnostic, therapeutic, and nuclear medicine radiologic technologists. Radiology assistants have become valuable in a rapidly growing field. They perform many time-consuming but simple radiology-related procedures.

In 2004, legislation to credential radiology assistants was referred to the Department of Health for a sunrise review. Credentialing was proposed because of a workforce shortage in the profession of radiology and concerns about training, supervision, and scope of practice for these practitioners. The sunrise review recommended certifying radiology assistants.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Certification is provided for radiology assistants, described as an advanced level diagnostic radiologic technologist. Diagnostic procedures are described and permission granted to perform additional procedures under the direction and supervision of a radiologist. Education requirements are described including completion of a preceptorship and examination. The examination process is outlined.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Requirement of a preceptorship was removed. The list of

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procedures done by radiologic technologists was consolidated. The requirement that an exam be developed was dropped.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2008.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The field of radiology has grown significantly in the past decade and now depends on the work of radiology assistants. A Department of Health sunrise review process recommended credentialing radiology assistants. This will improve patient safety and the quality of health care.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Brad Boswell, Washington State Radiology Association; Scott Harrison, M.D.; Jeffery K Chappel, Washington State Radiological Society.