

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1200

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C 12 L 91

*Synopsis As Enacted*

**Brief Description:** Continuing direct access to physical therapists.

By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Morris, Brough, Anderson, Brumsickle, Hine, Prentice, Fraser, Ebersole, Cole, Pruitt, Jacobsen, Prince, Belcher, Peery, Cooper, Wang, Cantwell, Day, Brekke, Winsley, Edmondson, R. Johnson, Padden, R. King, Nelson and Spanel).

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

**Background:** The State regulates and licenses physical therapists. The scope of physical therapy generally includes the treatment of any bodily or mental condition by the use of specified therapeutic physical modalities.

In 1989, the regulatory program was transferred from the Department of Licensing to the Department of Health.

Before 1988, a physical therapist could not treat a patient without a prior consultation and periodic review by a physician, podiatrist, dentist, chiropractor or naturopath. In 1988, the Legislature expanded the scope of practice by expressly authorizing physical therapists to treat patients with neuromuscular and musculoskeletal conditions directly, and without prior consultation or periodic review by these authorized health care practitioners. However, this authority expires on June 30, 1991.

Concurrently, the Legislative Budget Committee was required to conduct a study under the "Sunset" law and report to the Legislature by January 1, 1991 to determine whether this expanded practice authorization should be continued. However, the Legislature repealed the requirement to study the issue in 1990.

The Board of Physical Therapy has no specific authority to determine the standards of appropriate care.

The board may require licensees to obtain some degree of continuing professional education as a condition for license renewal, but has never exercised this authority.

**Summary:** Technical references to the transfer of the physical therapy regulatory program to the Department of Health are made.

The authority for physical therapists to treat patients directly and without the necessity of a prior consultation or periodic review from other health care practitioners is continued indefinitely.

The Board of Physical Therapy is directed to determine the standards of appropriate care.

As a condition for license renewal, a licensee is required to meet requirements for continuing competency as established by the board.

***Votes on Final Passage:***

House	97	0
Senate	48	0

**Effective:** June 1, 1991  
January 1, 1992 (Section 7)