

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1200

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Health Care*

Title: An act relating to physical therapists.

Brief Description: Continuing direct access to physical therapists.

Sponsor(s): 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.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 14, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH CARE**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1200 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Casada, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson; Franklin; Morris; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The practice of physical therapy is regulated by law, and physical therapists must be licensed in order to practice in this State. 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 the necessity for a 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 new 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 However, the Legislature repealed the requirement to study the issue in 1990.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 is authorized to require licensees to obtain some degree of continuing professional education as a condition for license renewal, but has never exercised this authority.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Technical references to the transfer of the regulatory program to the Department of Health are made.

The expiration date of June 30, 1991 is repealed, and the authority for physical therapists to treat patients directly and without the necessity of a prior consultation or periodic review from authorized health care practitioners is continued indefinitely.

The board is directed to determine the standards of appropriate care.

As a condition for re-licensure, a licensee is required to meet requirements for continuing competency to be established by the board.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Physical therapists are not limited in their choice of practice setting, and the board must determine by rule the standards for appropriateness of care.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The substitute bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 1, 1991, except for the authority of the board to develop continuing competency requirements which takes effect on January 1, 1992.

Testimony For: The repeal of the sunset dates is necessary to continue the authority of physical therapists to treat patients directly.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Dottie Nelson, Mark Lane and Dr. Rebecca Sullivan, Washington State Physical Therapy Association (Pro).