

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1200

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM-CARE,
MARCH 28, 1991**

Brief Description: Continuing direct access to physical therapists.

SPONSORS: 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

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Scott Plack (786-7409)

Hearing Dates: March 27, 1991; March 28, 1991

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.

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. 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 However, the Legislature repealed the requirement to study the issue in 1990.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:

The authority for physical therapists to treat patients directly and without the necessity of a prior consultation or periodic review 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.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: June 1, 1991 except for continued competency provisions which take effect on January 1, 1992.

TESTIMONY FOR:

The repeal of the sunset date will allow physical therapists to continue to treat patients directly.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Mark Lane and Dottie Nelson, Washington State Physical Therapy Association (pro)