

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1392

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,  
FEBRUARY 24, 1992

**Brief Description:** Making major changes to acupuncturist licensure.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Locke, Prince, Braddock, Ballard, Wang and Brekke)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; M. Kreidler, Niemi, Sumner, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Sarena Seifer (786-7417)

**Hearing Dates:** February 24, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

Acupuncture is principally a health care service based on traditional Oriental medical theory using acupuncture needles and other modalities to diagnose and treat organic or functional disorders.

The state's Acupuncture Practice Act regulates the practice of acupuncture and requires that acupuncturists be certified. Certification is, in part, dependent on successful passage of a written examination in English.

The Acupuncture Practice Act is scheduled for termination on July 1, 1991, and repeal on July 1, 1992, under the sunset law.

**SUMMARY:**

Acupuncture is redefined as a health care service based on a traditional Asian system of medical theory. The acupuncture scope of practice is expanded to include therapeutic breathing and exercise techniques based on traditional Asian theory.

An acupuncturist or acupuncture assistant, under the supervision of an acupuncturist, may practice ear acupuncture as an adjunct to the treatment of alcoholism or other drug dependency. The department is authorized to certify acupuncture assistants who complete an approved training program to practice ear acupuncture. The certification is renewable, and subject to the provisions of the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

The acupuncture written examination required for certification is no longer required to be in English.

Washington State acupuncturists practicing exclusively out of state or on sabbatical shall be granted inactive license status and pay a reduced license fee.

References to Director of Licensing are changed to Secretary of Health.

The scheduled sunset termination and repeal dates for the acupuncture regulatory law are repealed.

\$55,081 is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1993 from the health professions account to the Department of Health.

**Appropriation:** \$55,081

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:**

The original acupuncture definition and scope of practice are restored. References to "Asian" are changed to "Oriental."

The authorization for acupuncturists and a newly created class of acupuncture assistants to practice ear acupuncture as an adjunct to the treatment of alcoholism is removed.

The appropriation is removed.

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

There is a need to recognize the role that acupuncture can play in the treatment of alcoholism and chemical dependency. Acupuncturists should be required to demonstrate English competency, but should be allowed to demonstrate their clinical skills in their native language.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Mark Imlay, Acupuncture Association of Washington (pro with amendments); Barbara Mitchell (pro with amendments); Jianxim Huang, Acupuncture Association of Washington (pro with amendments); Ron Jackson, Evergreen Treatment Services (pro); Mary Kubbs, King County Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (pro)