

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1459

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to athletic trainers.

Brief Description: Regulating athletic trainers.

Sponsors: Representatives Heavey, Wood, Lisk, G. Cole, Appelwick, Jacobsen, Basich, Ludwig, Morton, Dunshee, Grant, Thibaudeau, R. Johnson, Brumsickle, Springer, Orr, Cooke, Veloria, Flemming, Dyer, Quall, Chandler, Dellwo, Ballasiotes, Pruitt, Karahalios, J. Kohl, Eide and Finkbeiner.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Backlund; Conway; Cooke; Flemming; Lisk; Morris; Thibaudeau and Veloria.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative R. Johnson.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Currently, athletic trainers are not regulated by the state as a health profession. An athletic trainer is a sports injury specialist who practices under the direction of a health care practitioner in the prevention, evaluation and treatment of athletic injuries through the use of physical modalities.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Individuals may apply for certification as athletic trainers by meeting the qualifications specified in the act. No person may represent oneself as a certified athletic trainer without being certified for practice by the Department of Health. Athletic trainers work under the direction of an authorized health care practitioner in treating injured athletes.

Qualifications for certification as an athletic trainer include attaining the age of 18; possessing a baccalaureate or graduate degree from a college or university with an athletic training curriculum; passing an examination in basic and clinical sciences and athletic training techniques; possessing a minimum of three consecutive years of employment in athletic training; and paying the required certification fee.

The Secretary of Health is authorized to approve educational programs; administer examinations; waive examinations for certification for persons who apply within one year of the effective date of this act and meet commonly accepted standards of education and experience; adopt rules to implement the act; establish fees; issue, deny and renew certificates; approve minimum educational programs; prepare examinations; define experience requirements; adopt rules defining continuing competency; maintain records and otherwise administer the program.

The secretary must consult athletic trainer organizations in the adoption of rules.

Athletic trainers credentialed in other states with substantially similar standards may be certified for practice without examination.

The procedures and unprofessional conduct provisions of the Uniform Disciplinary Act govern certified athletic trainers.

The state regulation of athletic trainers is exclusive, but local government may levy business taxes and regulate matters not otherwise regulated by this practice act.

Athletic trainers are considered health care providers for the purposes of the informed consent for health care law.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill replaces the licensing program of athletic trainers, including an exclusive scope of practice, with a voluntary certification program. Certification offers applicants who qualify, an exclusive use of the title "certified" in connection with their practice but does not restrict others from practicing.

Fiscal Note: Available. Requested on substitute February 3, 1994.

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

Testimony For: Athletic trainers who treat sports-related injuries should be credentialed as a health profession in order to assure a level of competence and provide for accountability through the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Testimony Against: This area of practice should involve a close working relationship with physical therapists who supervise athletic trainers in clinical settings. The definition of the scope of practice is overly broad and encompasses any sport for entertainment, and is not limited to organized sport events.

Witnesses: Representative Heavey, prime sponsor (pro); and Lance Gatter, Todd Doran, Martin Matney and Joel Johnson, Washington State Athletic Trainers Association (pro).