

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1871

AS OF MARCH 31, 1993

Brief Description: Regulating chiropractic care for industrial insurance.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Heavey, Kessler and Lemmon)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Dave Cheal (786-7576)

Hearing Dates: April 1, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Under the industrial insurance law, an injured worker is entitled to proper and necessary medical care from a physician of the worker's choice. The Department of Labor and Industries' administrative rules define "physician" as a person licensed to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine. The rules also define "doctor" to include persons licensed to practice medicine, osteopathic medicine, chiropractic, drugless therapeutics, podiatry, dentistry, and optometry. Doctors are authorized to sign accident report forms for injured workers and temporary disability authorization forms. Only physicians licensed to practice medicine may examine injured workers to determine the extent of a worker's permanent impairment.

Within the Health and Rehabilitation Services section of the department's Industrial Insurance Division is an Office of the Medical Director. The department has established several health care provider advisory committees, including a Chiropractic Advisory Committee to advise the department on such issues as establishing standards for effective and accepted chiropractic treatment and consultant reviews, and reviewing the performance of individual chiropractors.

The department is authorized to establish maximum fee schedules for physicians, surgeons, hospitals, druggists, physician assistants, and other providers. In establishing fee schedules, the department is required to consider its duty to purchase health care in a prudent, cost-effective manner without unduly restricting access to necessary care. The department's fee schedules are coordinated with other agencies that make payments to health care providers.

The department is authorized to conduct audits of health services providers and to examine patient records during the audit, to approve or deny applications to participate as a provider of services, and to terminate or suspend eligibility to participate as a provider of services.

SUMMARY:

The health services available to injured workers include chiropractic treatment in appropriate cases within the scope of practice.

Injured workers may be required by the Department of Labor and Industries to undergo chiropractic examination to assist the department in making determinations for closing a claim, in assessing the necessity and appropriateness of care, and in making other related determinations.

Within the appropriate scope of practice, chiropractors may conduct special medical examinations for determining permanent disabilities in consultation with physicians. The department has authority to request an examination by a single chiropractor in appropriate cases, but unless the examination has been requested by the department, a chiropractor's determination of the extent of a worker's disability may not be used as evidence before the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals.

The department may develop chiropractic treatment standards in conjunction with the Department of Health. The standards should include some or all of the following: standards designed to assure quality treatment and to contain costs, and standards for requesting consultation with chiropractors on the necessity or appropriateness of care and other subjects within the scope of chiropractic practice. Standards may require review of chiropractic treatment based on a specified number of treatments, but may not require termination of treatment based solely on the number of treatments.

The director will appoint an associate medical director for chiropractic.

Chiropractors are included in the list of health services providers subject to department audit and fee schedule requirements.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available