

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2462

As Passed House:

February 16, 1998

Title: An act relating to the registration of surgical technologists.

Brief Description: Providing for the registration of surgical technologists.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Backlund, Dyer and Anderson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/15/98, 1/20/98 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/3/98, 2/5/98 [DPS(HC)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/98, 98-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; Cody, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Murray, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Parlette; Sherstad; Wood and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Conway.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Health Care be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Benson.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background: Surgical technologists are non-regulated personnel principally employed by hospitals as part of the operating room team which works under the supervision of surgeons to perform certain tasks commonly referred to as "second assisting" or the "scrub" role.

Some are employed by ambulatory surgery centers, or private physician operating suites. The scrub role includes a variety of tasks assuring the physical preparation of the operating room and preparation of basic sterile packs and trays, generally creating the sterile field during operative procedures. In comparison, "first assisting" implies more advanced tasks such as closing sutures, stapling, assisting with bleeding vessels, or other duties the surgeon may delegate to physicians, nurses or physician assistants.

Summary of Bill: There is a declaration of legislative intent that the registration of surgical technologists is necessary for the protection of public health and safety.

Individuals performing surgical technology are representing themselves as surgical technologists are required to register with the Department of Health, and the Secretary of Health must issue a registration to applicants on forms provided by the secretary.

Registered surgical technologists are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act, and the secretary is the disciplining authority.

The activities and duties of surgical technologists in the surgical setting are determined by the secretary by rule in consultation with the Medical Quality Assurance Commission, Nursing Quality Assurance Commission, and Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1999.

Testimony For: (Health Care) The role of surgical technologists should be defined in context with the operating room team, and they should be regulated because of the inherent risks of surgery.

(Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Health Care) Surgical technologists should be regulated by the Nursing Commission, not the Secretary of Health.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Health Care) Jan Olmsted and Michal Kelly-Miller, Surgical Technologists of Washington State (pro); Donna Watson and Peggy Sala, Association of Operating Room Nurses (con); and Tamara Warnke, Washington State Nurses Association (con).

(Appropriations) None.