

ANALYSIS OF HOUSE BILL 2462

Surgical technologists.

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.

At the request of the legislature, the question of the need for regulating surgical technologists was referred to the Department of Health and the Board of Health for findings and recommendations under the Sunrise Review Act. As a result a departmental inter-professional workgroup was formed to define the roles of the operating room team of surgical assistants, first assistants, and second assistants. The department and the board jointly recommended that surgical technologists be registered under the Secretary in order to establish standards and provide oversight through the Uniform Disciplinary Act, and that regulation include the tasks associated with second assisting or scrub, as defined by rule.

SUMMARY:

There is a declaration of legislative intent that registration of surgical technologists is necessary for the protection of public health and safety by establishing professional standards with uniform application in surgical settings in the state.

Individuals practicing as surgical technologists are required to register with the Department of Health, and the Secretary must issue a registration to any applicant who meets the following qualifications: Certification by a nationally recognized educational program in surgical technology;

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and graduation from an accredited educational program in surgical technology or completion of alternative training determined by the Secretary. Surgical technologists currently practicing can be registered notwithstanding the certification and education requirements if applying within 90 days of the effective date of this act.

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

The act takes effect July 1, 1998.

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