

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5715

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C 285 L 97  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Licensing orthotists and prosthetists.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Wood, Fairley, Franklin, Deccio and Winsley).

**Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care**

**House Committee on Health Care**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Orthotists design, fabricate, and fit braces and other supportive devices for patients who have injuries or diseases which interfere with normal body functions. Prosthetists make and fit artificial limbs for patients who have lost their own due to injury or disease.

Currently, there is no state regulation of these professions. There are an estimated 94 privately certified orthotists and prosthetists in the state, 44 of whom are members of the Washington Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, and 87 are certified by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics. These private certifications require minimum training, approved competency testing and an approved amount of continuing education.

Orthotic and prosthetic practitioners are primarily self-employed or employed in small private practices. Orthotic and prosthetic devices are prescribed by a referring authorized health care practitioner, although there is currently no legal requirement for a prescription.

A sunrise review was conducted on a proposal to license orthotists and prosthetists. The recommendation called for these professions to be licensed.

**Summary:** Orthotists and prosthetists are regulated at the level of licensure. These practitioners may only provide treatment using a new orthoses or prostheses under an order from an authorized health care practitioner. These practitioners are defined in statute.

The Secretary of Health has the authority to administer rules, determine minimum education requirements, evaluate education programs, set fees, and adopt rules implementing continuing competency requirements.

The Secretary of Health is also given authority to appoint an advisory committee composed of five members: three practitioners regulated under this act, one physician, and two public members.

Licensure application requirements are defined. They include a baccalaureate degree with appropriate course work, other formal training, a clinical internship and passing an exam.

Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under this act are regulated under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Clarification is provided for alternate standards for licensing.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	47	1	
House	92	6	(House amended)
Senate	43	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 27, 1997  
December 1, 1998 (Sections 1-5 and 8-12)