

ANALYSIS OF HOUSE BILL 1864

Providing for the registration of 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 skills and aseptic techniques commonly associated with the scrub role during surgery.

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. The department and the board jointly recommended that surgical technologists be registered under the Secretary in order to establish standard and provide oversight through the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

SUMMARY: There is a declaration of legislative intent that the registration of surgical technologists is in the public interest. Surgical technologists are allied health occupations providing certain skills and aseptic techniques associated with the scrub role during surgery.

A surgical technologist is defined as a person registered by the Department of Health who practices under the supervision and delegation of a physician, nurse, or physician assistant.

Surgical technologists defined scrub activities and behavior in the surgical setting, maintaining the sterile field and preparation of instruments and supplies throughout the surgical process. It does not include hemostasis, suturing, or tying or placing sutures.

Surgical technologists performing surgical technology or representing themselves as surgical technologists are required to register with the department. Exemptions from the registration requirements are specified.

The department is authorized to adopt rules setting registration fees and administer the registration program. The Uniform Disciplinary Act governs the discipline of surgical technologists for unprofessional conduct and the Secretary of Health acts as the disciplinary authority.

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