

Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1787

Brief Description: *Requiring the department of labor and industries to adopt rules on physician assistants.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Campbell, Cody, Conway, Clements and Edwards.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to establish rules permitting physician assistants to sign initial evaluations of patients covered under industrial insurance.*

Hearing Date: *2/21/01*

Staff: *Chris Cordes (786-7103).*

Background:

A worker who, in the course of employment, is injured or suffers disability from an occupational disease is entitled to benefits under Washington's industrial insurance law. To obtain benefits, the worker must file an application within specified time limits. The attending physician has a statutory duty to inform the worker of his or her rights and assist the worker in making the application for benefits. The application must include a certificate from the attending physician.

Under department rules, a physician is defined as a medical or osteopathic physician. Department rules, however, permit accident report forms (applications for benefits) to be signed by medical and osteopathic physicians, chiropractors, naturopathic physicians, podiatrists, dentists, and optometrists. The department does not accept accident report forms signed by physician assistants.

Physician assistants are licensed to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine to a limited extent under the supervision of a licensed physician or osteopathic physician respectively. Department of Health (DOH) rules establish three categories of licensed physician

assistants: certified physician assistants who have passed a national board examination; physician assistants who are eligible to take the board examination; and physician assistant-surgical assistants who were licensed between September 30, 1989, and December 31, 1989, and have a limited function under the DOH rules.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Labor and Industries must establish rules permitting licensed physician assistants to sign initial evaluations of patients covered under industrial insurance.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*