
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1568

Brief Description: Modifying physician assistant provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Darneille, Pflug, Cody, Campbell, Schual-Berke, Alexander and Skinner.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Enables physician-supervised physician assistants to execute the certificate that accompanies an injured worker's application for industrial insurance benefits.

Hearing Date: 2/18/03

Staff: Derek Green (786-5793); 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. These benefits include proper and necessary medical and surgical services from a physician of the worker's choice.

In order to qualify for benefits, an injured worker is required to file an application for benefits with the Department of Labor and Industries (Department) or his or her self-insured employer. The application must be accompanied by a certificate of the attending physician. Department rules specify that the injured worker and attending physician must file a report of accident upon the determination that the injury is work-related. The report must include the signed findings of the attending physician.

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 rules require physicians' assistants to obtain advanced approval from the Department prior to treating industrial injury cases. The rules also limit the industrial insurance services that a physician assistant may provide. Licensed physician assistants can fill out accident and other reports, but the reports must be signed by a physician.

Summary of Bill:

Physician assistants practicing with physician supervision are permitted to execute the required physician certificate that accompanies the injured worker's application for industrial insurance benefits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.