
**Health Care & Wellness
Committee**

SSB 5503

Brief Description: Licensing persons who offer athletic training services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Marr, Keiser, Brown, Brandland, Fairley, Schoesler, Berkey, Shin, Delvin, Kohl-Welles and McAuliffe).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes athletic trainers as a new health profession to be licensed by the Secretary of Health.

Hearing Date: 3/26/07

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Athletic trainers specialize in the prevention, assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries. Athletic trainers work in a variety of settings under the supervision of licensed health care providers. Generally, athletic trainers must hold a bachelor's degree and many hold graduate level degrees. According to the national Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2004 there were more than 300 accredited education programs for athletic trainers.

The Department of Health (Department) released a sunrise review in 1993 and again in 2002. Both sunrise reviews found that the proposals to regulate athletic trainers did not meet the sunrise criteria. In its 2002 review, the Department found that: (1) the potential for harm was not clearly recognizable; (2) there were already adequate assurances of competence; and (3) the public can be effectively protected by current private certification.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Athletic trainers are created as a new health profession to be regulated by the Secretary of Health (Secretary). To practice athletic training one must hold a license issued by the Secretary. "Athletic training" is defined to include risk management and prevention of athletic injuries; recognition, evaluation, and assessment of athletic injuries; immediate care of athletic injuries; treatment, rehabilitation, and reconditioning of athletic injuries; and the referral of an athlete to appropriately licensed health care providers. "Athletic training" does not include spinal adjustment or manipulative mobilization of the spine; orthotic or prosthetic services; the practice of occupational therapy; the practice of acupuncture; or prescribing drugs or surgery. The term "athletic injuries" refers to injuries and conditions sustained by athletes through their participation in exercise, recreation, sport, or games and that are within the education of an athletic trainer. "Athletes" are individuals engaged in athletic activity that is generally conducted by an educational institution or a professional, amateur, or recreational sports club or organization.

An applicant for a license to practice athletic training must demonstrate that he or she has: (1) submitted an application and paid a licensing fee; (2) received a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution approved by the Secretary; and (3) a current credential as an athletic trainer from the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification and is in good standing with that organization. The Secretary may determine which states have substantially equivalent standards to Washington's and issue licenses to applicants from those states.

Athletic trainers must practice through the consultation, referral, or service plan of a physician, physician assistant, osteopathic physician, osteopathic physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, naturopath, physical therapist, chiropractor, dentist, massage practitioner, acupuncturist, occupational therapist, or podiatric physician.

Exemptions from licensing requirements apply to credentialed health care providers performing services within their scope of practice; individuals employed by the federal government; students in an athletic training educational program; individuals with a limited practice in Washington for no more than 90 days per year; school teachers or coaches; and personal trainers employed by an athletic club or fitness center.

The Athletic Training Advisory Committee (Committee) is established. The Secretary shall appoint the five members to the Committee which shall include four athletic trainers with at least five years of experience and one member of the public. At the request of the Secretary, the Committee may provide advice regarding the regulation of athletic trainers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2007.