

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2439

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to exemptions from licensure as a physical therapist.

Brief Description: Allowing persons satisfying physical therapy clinical education requirements to be exempt from licensure while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist assistant.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Warnick, Cody, Harris, Kelley, Clibborn, Jinkins, Roberts and Hurst.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/25/12, 1/26/12 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows a person pursuing a course of study to become a physical therapist assistant to be supervised by a licensed physical therapist assistant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jinkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clibborn, Green, Harris, Kelley, Moeller and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Physical therapy is based on movement science and includes a variety of functions and services such as:

- examining, evaluating, and testing individuals with health and movement-related conditions to determine a diagnosis, prognosis, plan of therapeutic intervention, and to assess and document the ongoing effects of intervention;

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- alleviating impairments and functional limitations in movement;
- training for, and the evaluation of, the function of a patient wearing an orthosis or prosthesis;
- performing certain wound care services;
- reducing the risk of injury, impairment, functional limitation, and disability related to movement; and
- engaging in administration, consultation, education, and research.

Generally, people need to be licensed as a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant in order to practice physical therapy. However, a person does not need to be licensed as a physical therapist assistant if he or she is pursuing a course of study leading to a degree as a physical therapist assistant in an approved professional educational program and is satisfying supervised clinical education requirements related to his or her physical therapist assistant education while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A person satisfying supervised clinical education requirements related to a course of study leading to a degree as a physical therapist assistant may be supervised by a licensed physical therapist assistant (in addition to a licensed physical therapist).

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill affects persons pursuing a course of study to become physical therapist assistants. The original bill affected persons pursuing a course of study to become physical therapists.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill helps get people through their educational programs and into the work force. Currently, only a licensed physical therapist may supervise a person studying to become a physical therapist assistant. However, accrediting bodies and Medicare all expect that licensed physical therapist assistants may supervise physical therapist assistant students. Students have faced challenges finishing their courses of study because there is a shortage of people willing to supervise them. This has also adversely affected students studying to become physical therapists.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor; and Melissa Johnson, Dr. Elaine Armantrout, Donette Parry, and Mickie Hucke, Physical Therapy Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.