

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1640

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 14, 2011

Title: An act relating to respiratory care practitioners.

Brief Description: Concerning respiratory care practitioners.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Hinkle, Cody and Moeller.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/25/11, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/10/11, 3/14/11 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Kline, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: A respiratory care practitioner (RCP) works with patients who have deficiencies and abnormalities affecting the cardiopulmonary system and associated systems. A RCP must be licensed and registered in order to practice, unless exempt, and must be under the order and qualified medical direction of a physician. The practice of respiratory care covers an array of procedures, including the administration of prescribed medical gases; postural drainage, chest percussion, and vibration; and the insertion of devices to draw, analyze, infuse, or monitor pressure in blood as prescribed by a physician or an advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP).

Summary of Bill: The types of practitioners under whose order and direction a RCP may practice are expanded to health care practitioners instead of physicians. Health care practitioners are physicians; osteopathic physicians or surgeons; and, acting within the scope of their respective licenses, podiatric physicians and surgeons, ARNPs, naturopaths, physician assistants, and osteopathic physician assistants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will make statutory updates to reflect what is current practice. Health care is about teamwork and this will encourage teamwork. The current statute was adopted in 1984 and allows only physicians to provide orders. This will not affect the scope of practice of the RCPs, but will reflect the changes made to the practice of health care over the years. RCPs work with practitioners other than physicians, and they need to take direction from them.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Nick Federici, Scott Mahoney, Respiratory Care Society of Washington.