

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2127

As Passed House:
February 5, 2014

Title: An act relating to the authority of medical program directors.

Brief Description: Concerning the authority of medical program directors.

Sponsors: Representatives Van De Wege and Tharinger.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/13/14, 1/23/14 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/5/14, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that medical program directors may not independently restrict the certification or employment status of emergency medical services personnel unless the Department of Health has imposed restrictions on the person's certification.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clibborn, Green, G. Hunt, Jinkins, Manweller, Moeller, Morrell, Ross, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives DeBolt and Rodne.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392)

Background:

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.

Emergency medical service (EMS) personnel are certified by the Department of Health (Department), which is also responsible for their discipline in cases involving unprofessional conduct. There are four primary categories of EMS personnel: paramedics, intermediate life support technicians, emergency medical technicians, and first responders. Emergency medical service personnel may only provide services within the scope of care established in the curriculum of the person's level of certification or any specialized training. In addition, the services must be included in the protocols of each county's medical program director (MPD).

Medical program directors are certified by the Department which also defines their duties and responsibilities. Among the responsibilities of MPDs, as defined by the Department in rule, are providing medical control and direction to EMS personnel in their medical duties, supervising the training of EMS personnel, and auditing the medical care performance of EMS personnel. With respect to certification and disciplinary decisions, MPDs are authorized to recommend to the Department the certification, recertification, or denial of certification of EMS personnel and to recommend whether or not disciplinary action should be taken against EMS personnel. The Department, however, remains the disciplining authority in actions against EMS personnel.

Summary of Bill:

The authority of medical program directors is specifically limited to prohibit them from independently restricting the certification or employment status of paramedics, intermediate life support technicians, emergency medical technicians, and first responders, unless the Department of Health has imposed restrictions on the provider's certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: 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 takes current policy from rules and puts it into statute. While there are many steps that medical program directors may take with emergency medical personnel if they need assistance, this bill simply says that in order to end somebody's certification and employment, the Department of Health should agree with the action.

(With concerns) The term "employment status" is unclear as it relates to situations in which a medical program director places an emergency medical services provider in a personal improvement plan and the employer wants to put the person in a different type of status for the duration of the plan. This bill could have unintended consequences.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Van De Wege, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Bob Berschauer, Washington Ambulance Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.