

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1339

As of March 14, 2013

Title: An act relating to East Asian medicine practitioners.

Brief Description: Clarifying the scope of practice for East Asian medicine practitioners and removing certain referral requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Tharinger, Angel, Cody, Harris, Jinkins, Green and Moscoso.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/25/13, 92-0.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 3/14/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: East Asian medicine practitioners are licensed by the Department of Health (DOH). East Asian medicine is a health care service utilizing East Asian medicine diagnosis and treatment to promote health and treat organic or functional disorders. East Asian medicine includes the following: acupuncture; the use of electrical, mechanical, or magnetic devices to stimulate acupuncture points or meridians; moxibustion; acupressure; cupping; dermal friction technique; infra-red; sonopuncture; laserpuncture; aquapuncture; dietary advice and health education based on East Asian medical theory; breathing, relaxation, and East Asian exercise techniques; qi gong; East Asian massage and Tui na; and superficial heat and cold therapies.

A licensed East Asian medicine practitioner must develop a written plan for consultation, emergency transfer, and referral to other health care practitioners operating within their scopes of practice. The plan must be submitted to DOH upon initial licensure and upon renewal. DOH may withhold the license if the plan fails to meet DOH standards.

Reflexology is a health care service involving the application of pressure with fingers to the lower one-third of the extremities, feet, hands, and outer ears. Beginning July 1, 2013, persons practicing reflexology must be certified by DOH. In order to be certified, the person must be at least 18 years of age, have successfully completed a course of study in reflexology, and have passed an examination.

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.

Summary of Bill: Reflexology is added to the scope of practice of an East Asian medicine practitioner.

The requirement that an East Asian medicine practitioner develop a written plan for consultation, emergency transfer, and referral is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 removes a redundant and unnecessary reporting requirement. It is good policy and will expand access to health care during a time when we need more health care practitioners. This bill results in a savings of \$20,000 per year and provides clarification of the scope of practice of East Asian medical practitioners. Additional requirements that address public safety are in current law. East Asian medical practitioners perform some of the activities of reflexologists and adding this to the scope of practice of East Asian medical practitioners is supported by the reflexologists. Relating to the referral agreements, DOH is now requiring that the licenses be independently signed every year which prevents online renewals.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Tharinger, prime sponsor; Leslie Emerick, WA East Asian Medicine Assn.; Curtis Eschels, WA East Asian Medicine Assn.