

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1010

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to referral of medical cases to occupational therapists.

Brief Description: Concerning referral of medical cases to occupational therapists.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Cody, Harris, Moeller, Manweller, Walsh, Clibborn, Robinson, Tharinger, Riccelli, Rodne, Short, Gregerson and Buys.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/27/15, 1/30/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits an occupational therapist to treat a medical case upon referral from an optometrist.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Clibborn, DeBolt, Jinkins, Johnson, Moeller, Robinson, Rodne, Short and Tharinger.

Staff: Alexa Silver (786-7190).

Background:

An occupational therapist is a person licensed by the Board of Occupational Therapy Practice to practice occupational therapy. "Occupational therapy" is the scientifically based use of purposeful activity that maximizes independence, prevents disability, and maintains the health of individuals who are limited by physical injury or illness, psychosocial dysfunction, developmental or learning disabilities, or the aging process. It includes evaluation, treatment, and consultation. Examples of the practice of occupational therapy include:

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- using specifically designed activities and exercises to enhance neurodevelopmental, cognitive, perceptual motor, sensory integrative, and psychomotor functioning;
- administering and interpreting tests such as manual muscle and sensory integration;
- teaching daily living skills;
- developing pre-vocational skills and play and avocational activities;
- designing, fabricating, or applying selected orthotic and prosthetic devices or selected adaptive equipment;
- adapting environments for persons with disabilities; and
- wound care management.

An occupational therapist may treat a medical case only upon referral of a physician, osteopathic physician, podiatric physician and surgeon, naturopath, chiropractor, physician assistant, psychologist, or advanced registered nurse practitioner. If an occupational therapist evaluates a patient and finds that the patient's case is medical, he or she must refer the case to a physician for appropriate medical direction if direction is lacking. A case is not a medical case if there is an absence of pathology or if a pathology has stabilized and the occupational therapist is only treating the client's functional deficits.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

An occupational therapist may treat a medical case upon referral of an optometrist.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill uses the term "optometrist" in the singular, rather than the plural.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) Optometrists would like the ability to refer patients to occupational therapists. This bill would help patients get needed care and save money. In rural areas, there may not be enough eye surgeons to meet patients' needs for low vision problems, which are very common. Occupational therapists help patients who have suffered traumatic brain injuries and strokes, which affect their vision, to manage tasks of daily living. They also work with children who need therapy to help them make sense of the visual information their brains are receiving. In 46 other states, optometrists can refer patients to occupational therapists. This is not an expansion of the occupational therapy scope of practice.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Kate White Tudor, Washington Occupational Therapy Association; and Brad Tower, Optometric Physicians of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.