

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1893

As Passed House:
February 10, 2022

Title: An act relating to allowing emergency medical technicians to provide medical evaluation, testing, and vaccines outside of an emergency in response to a public health agency request.

Brief Description: Allowing emergency medical technicians to provide medical evaluation, testing, and vaccines outside of an emergency in response to a public health agency request.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Donaghy, Riccelli, Leavitt, Simmons, Slatter, Tharinger, Berg, Taylor, Frame, Macri, Harris-Talley and Pollet; by request of Department of Health).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/27/22, 1/31/22 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/10/22, 88-5.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies the definition of "emergency medical technician" (EMT) to allow EMTs to provide collaborative medical care.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Davis, Harris, Macri, Maycumber, Riccelli, Rude, Simmons, Stonier, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Emergency medical services (EMS) personnel are certified by the Department of Health (DOH). There are four primary categories of EMS personnel: paramedics; emergency medical technicians (EMTs); advanced EMTs; and emergency medical responders (also known as first responders). Emergency medical services 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.

Certified EMS personnel are only authorized to provide patient care when performing in a prehospital emergency setting or during interfacility ambulance transport, for a licensed EMS agency or an organization recognized by the Secretary of Health, and within a scope of care that meets defined criteria.

An EMT is a person who is authorized by the Secretary of Health to render emergency medical care or, under the supervision and direction of an approved medical program director, to participate in a community assistance referral and education services program.

In 2020 the DOH adopted a policy statement regarding EMS providers and emergency vaccinations. In compliance with Washington's EMS scope of practice, the DOH authorized EMTs to administer vaccines under certain conditions when there is a state or local declaration of emergency.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The 2020 Department of Health policy allowing emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to administer vaccines under certain conditions is codified and expanded to include communicable disease response outside of a state of emergency.

The definition of "emergency medical technician" is modified to allow EMTs to provide collaborative medical care. Collaborative medical care means medical treatment and care provided pursuant to agreements with local, regional, or state public health agencies to control and prevent the spread of communicable diseases, which is rendered separately from emergency medical service. The provision of collaborative medical care may not exceed the EMT's training and certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 will help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) have played a critical role in the response to the pandemic. Emergency medical technicians should be able to administer vaccines and conduct testing after the COVID state of emergency is over. Emergency medical technicians are trained to provide these services, but the law limits them to prehospital settings. This bill will help increase access to health care, including in rural areas. The bill will also increase equity in response to vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and people experiencing homelessness, who often bear a disproportionate burden of the impact of communicable diseases.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There should be an amendment limiting EMTs to providing collaborative medical care pursuant to agreements with public health agencies.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Brandy Donaghy, prime sponsor; Kristin Reichl, Washington State Department of Health; and Joe Kunzler.

(Other) Sean Graham, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.