

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6280

C 286 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning East Asian medicine practitioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Murray, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Jacobsen and Kline).

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care
House Committee on Health Care & Wellness

Background: Acupuncture is defined under current state law as "a health care service based on an Oriental system of medical theory utilizing Oriental diagnosis and treatment to promote health and treat organic or functional disorders by treating specific acupuncture points or meridians." The practice of acupuncture and acupuncturists has been regulated in Washington State since 1985. The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) is currently responsible for regulating the practice of acupuncture including applications for licensure, examinations, training requirements, and discipline under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. The Secretary can appoint members of the profession to serve on an ad hoc advisory committee to assist the Secretary in regulating the acupuncture profession.

A sunrise review of the acupuncturist scope of practice was conducted by the DOH, with findings contained in a report published in December 2009. The review noted that the scope of practice for acupuncturists has not changed in 24 years. The review recommends that those who practice acupuncture also be permitted to: include the use of lancets, give dietary advice, use breathing, relaxation and exercise techniques, QI Gong, health education, Asian massage, Tui Na, hot and cold therapies, and the use of herbs, vitamins, minerals, and dietary and nutritional supplements. The DOH specifically denied the request that acupuncture practitioners be permitted to conduct in-office testing and took no position on the proposal to change the title of the profession.

Summary: The state's professional designation of acupuncturist is changed to East Asian medicine practitioner. Those who are currently licensed as an acupuncturist are to be granted the title of East Asian Medicine Practitioner upon license renewal. The practice of acupuncture is changed to East Asian medicine. In addition to the techniques and methods used by practitioners under the current law, East Asian Medicine Practitioners can use lancets, give dietary advice, use breathing, relaxation and exercise techniques, QI Gong, health education, East Asian massage, Tui Na, hot and cold therapies, and make use of herbs, vitamins, minerals, and dietary and nutritional supplements.

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.

It is clarified that individuals may provide the following techniques and services without being licensed as an East Asian Medicine Practitioner: dietary advice and health education, breathing, relaxation, and East Asian exercise techniques, Qi Gong, East Asian massage, Tui Na, and superficial heat and cold therapies.

East Asian Medicine Practitioners are allowed to continue to treat a patient who has refused a consultation with a primary health care provider if the patient signs a waiver which includes: an explanation of the practitioners's scope of practice, and a statement that the services that an East Asian Medicine Practitioner is authorized to provide will not resolve the patient's underlying potentially serious disorder.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	96	0	(House amended) (Senate refused to concur)
House	97	0	(House receded/amended)
Senate	46	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010
July 1, 2010 (Section 17)
August 1, 2010 (Section 18)