
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1555

Brief Description: Concerning the education of surgical technologists.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Warnick, Cody, Morrell and Ryu.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds tasks that may be performed by a registered surgical technologist.
- Adds educational requirements for registered surgical technologists.

Hearing Date: 2/21/13

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

A surgical technologist is a person who is supervised in a surgical setting under the delegation of a physician, a registered nurse, an advanced registered nurse practitioner, an osteopathic physician, an osteopathic physician assistant, a podiatric physician, a physician assistant, or a naturopath. Surgical technologists typically perform tasks such as preparing basic sterile packs and trays; assisting with the physical preparation of the operating room; creating the sterile field; maintaining sterile technique during operative procedures; identifying and selecting appropriate packs, trays, and accessory/specialty equipment for each surgery; and preparing specimens for submission for pathological analysis.

Surgical technologists must register with the Department of Health (DOH) and do not have any specific scope of practice or educational requirements.

In 2012, the DOH conducted a sunrise review of a proposal that would make surgical technologists a certified profession. The proposal gave surgical technologists a specific scope of practice and imposed educational requirements on the profession. The DOH did not support the proposal because the significant barrier the proposal would present to surgical technologists was not justified by documented evidence of a problem in Washington.

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:

A surgical technologist may perform the following tasks under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner in a hospital or ambulatory surgical facility:

- maintain surgical instrument integrity from within the surgical field during surgical procedures;
- perform surgical support tasks, including instrument and equipment transfers and counts and managing fluids, specimens, and supplies;
- identify and correct breaks in asepsis; and
- other surgical tasks as directed.

No person may perform the functions of a surgical technologist unless he or she is registered with the DOH. In order to be registered, an applicant must:

- successfully complete a nationally and programmatically accredited surgical technology program;
- successfully complete a surgical technology program offered by the United States armed forces; or
- have been employed or contracted to perform surgical technology functions in a hospital or ambulatory surgical center for a period of one year in the five years immediately preceding January 1, 2015.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2013.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2014.