

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1378

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As of March 12, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to the supervision of medical assistants.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the supervision of medical assistants.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ybarra, Cody and Dolan.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/23/21, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long Term Care: 3/12/21.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a medical assistant assisting with a telemedicine visit to be supervised by a health care practitioner through interactive audio and video telemedicine technology.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

**Staff:** Ricci Crinzi (786-7253)

**Background:** The Department of Health licenses four different types of medical assistants—medical assistant-certified, medical assistant-registered, medical assistant-plebotomist, and medical assistant-hemodialysis technician. Each type of medical assistant must be supervised by a health care practitioner, including a physician, an osteopathic physician, a podiatric physician, a registered nurse, an advanced registered nurse practitioner, a naturopath, a physician assistant, or an optometrist. In most cases, the health care practitioner must be physically present and immediately available. The health care practitioner does not need to be present during procedures to withdraw blood, but must be immediately available.

**Summary of Bill:** During a telemedicine visit, supervision over a medical assistant assisting a health care practitioner with the telemedicine visit may be provided through

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interactive audio and video telemedicine technology.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill will allow medical assistants to provide care in rural areas in eastern Washington via telemedicine. The pandemic has highlighted the difficulty for rural farm workers to get access to health care. This bill would allow medical assistants the ability to visit farm workers and provide care while receiving supervision through telemedicine. Health care providers are hard to find in rural areas and allowing this supervised visit will help rural farm workers receive the medical care they need.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Alex Ybarra, Prime Sponsor; Kate White Tudor, Washington Association for Community Health.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.