

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2462

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to the registration of surgical technologists.

Brief Description: Providing for the registration of surgical technologists.

Sponsors: Representatives Backlund, Dyer and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/15/98, 1/20/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; Cody, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Murray, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Parlette; Sherstad; Wood and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Conway.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Surgical technologists are non-regulated personnel principally employed by hospitals as part of the operating room team which works under the supervision of surgeons to perform certain tasks commonly referred to as second assisting– or the scrub– role.

Some are employed by ambulatory surgery centers, or private physician operating suites. The scrub role includes a variety of tasks assuring the physical preparation of the operating room and preparation of basic sterile packs and trays, generally creating the sterile field during operative procedures. In comparison, first assisting– implies more advanced tasks such as closing sutures, stapling, assisting with bleeding vessels, or other duties the surgeon may delegate to physicians, nurses or physician assistants.

Summary of Substitute Bill: There is a declaration of legislative intent that registration of surgical technologists is necessary for the protection of public health and safety.

Individuals practicing as surgical technologists are required to register with the Department of Health, and the Secretary of Health must issue a registration to applicants on forms provided by the secretary.

Registered surgical technologists are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act, and the secretary is the disciplining authority.

Activities associated with second assisting/scrub are determined by the secretary by rule in consultation with the Medical Quality Assurance Commission, Nursing Quality Assurance Commission, and Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement of certification by the national professional educational program in surgical technology is deleted. The secretary is to be advised in the rule-making process by the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery. Technical changes were also made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1998.

Testimony For: The role of surgical technologists should be defined in context with the operating room team, and they should be regulated because of the inherent risks of surgery.

Testimony Against: Surgical technologists should be regulated by the Nursing Commission, not the Secretary of Health.

Testified: Jan Olmsted and Michal Kelly-Miller, Surgical Technologists of Washington State (pro); Donna Watson and Peggy Sala, Association of Operating Room Nurses (con); and Tamara Warnke, Washington State Nurses Association (con).