

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5149

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to the practice of occupational therapy.

**Brief Description:** Revising provisions relating to occupational therapy.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Johnson and Winsley).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 4/1/99 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Adds a definition of "occupational therapy practitioner."
- Authorizes osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, naturopaths, chiropractors, physician assistants, psychologists and advanced registered nurse practitioners to refer patients to occupational therapists for treatment.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander; Campbell; Conway and Edmonds.

**Staff:** John Welsh (786-7133).

**Background:**

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are licensed by the state for the practice of occupational therapy. No person may represent himself or herself as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant without holding a license.

An occupational therapist may treat a patient only upon the referral of a physician or podiatrist licensed in this state.

There is no definition of an occupational therapy practitioner provided in the law.

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**Summary of Bill:**

A definition of "occupational therapy practitioner" is added referring collectively to both an occupational therapist and an occupational therapy assistant when used in the law for a common purpose.

The class of health providers who may refer a patient for treatment by an occupational therapy practitioner is expanded to include an osteopathic physician, podiatric physician, naturopath, chiropractor, physician assistant, psychologist, or an advanced registered nurse practitioner.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The changes bring licensing provisions into conformance with national standards for the profession.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Kathy Stewart and Lori Stephens, Washington Occupational Therapy Association.