

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6414

As of January 17, 2000

Title: An act relating to optometric physician assistants.

Brief Description: Requiring the licensure of optometric physician assistants.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Deccio, Rasmussen, Stevens and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/17/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: Under current law, physician assistants cannot examine the eye for purposes of prescribing corrective lenses. Physician assistants do not exist for ophthalmologists because of the limitations in the practice provisions of the physician assistant's laws.

Some optometrists work with ophthalmologists, but are independent practitioners with limited prescriptive authority.

Summary of Bill: Licensed optometrists may obtain an optometric physician assistant credential upon completion of training under an ophthalmologist, which would expand the scope of their practice to include some limited surgical procedures and prescriptive authority. An optometric physician assistant could practice under the authority of an ophthalmologist with the approval of the Washington State Medical Quality Assurance Commission.

Limitations on physician assistant's scope of practice concerning the human eye are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2000.

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