

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1041

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 19, 2009

Title: An act relating to the authority of occupational therapists to purchase, store, and administer medications.

Brief Description: Authorizing the purchase, storage, and administration of medications by occupational therapists.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Morrell, Warnick, O'Brien, McCune, Liias, Kagi, Kenney and Wallace).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/09, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/16/09, 3/19/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Occupational Therapists. Occupational therapy is the scientifically-based use of purposeful activity that maximizes independence, prevents disability, and maintains the health of individuals who are limited by physical injury or illness, psychosocial dysfunction, developmental or learning disabilities, or the aging process. Examples of the practice of occupational therapy include:

- using specifically-designed activities and exercises to enhance neuro-developmental, cognitive, perceptual motor, sensory integrative, and psychomotor functioning;
- administering and interpreting tests such as manual muscle and sensory integration;
- teaching daily living skills;
- developing pre-vocational skills and play and avocational activities;
- designing, fabricating, or applying selected orthotic and prosthetic devices or selected adaptive equipment; and
- adapting environments for persons with disabilities.

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.

Physical Therapists. Physical therapists are authorized to purchase, store, and administer medications such as hydrocortisone (an anti-inflammatory), fluocinonide (an anti-inflammatory), topical anesthetics, silver sulfadiazine (used to treat bacterial or fungal infections), lidocaine (a local anesthetic), magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt), zinc oxide (used to treat skin irritations), and other similar medications. A pharmacist who dispenses these drugs to a licensed physical therapist is not liable for any adverse reactions caused by any method of use by the physical therapist. Current law does not permit occupational therapists to purchase, store, or administer these medications.

Summary of Bill: Occupational therapists are authorized to purchase, store, and administer topical and transdermal medications such as hydrocortisone, dexamethasone, fluocinonide, topical anesthetics, lidocaine, magnesium sulfate, and other similar medications as prescribed by a health care provider with prescribing authority. The administration of the medication must be documented in the patient's medical record. Some medications may be applied by the use of iontophoresis or phonophoresis. An occupational therapist may not purchase, store, or administer controlled substances. A pharmacist who dispenses drugs to a licensed occupational therapist is not liable for any adverse reactions caused by any method of use by the physical therapist.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Occupational therapists provide much needed rehabilitative services to patients; there is no reason that occupational therapists should not be doing this. Most of the medications used are absorbed through the skin. The Physical Therapy Association still has some issues with wound care but are working on some agreed upon language in this area.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; JoAnn Keller Green, Washington Occupational Therapy Association; Melissa Johnson, Physical Therapy Association of Washington.