

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2439

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 16, 2012

Title: An act relating to exemptions from licensure as a physical therapist.

Brief Description: Allowing persons satisfying physical therapy clinical education requirements to be exempt from licensure while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist assistant.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Green, Warnick, Cody, Harris, Kelley, Clibborn, Jinkins, Roberts and Hurst).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/12, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/16/12 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Kline, Parlette and Pridemore.

Staff: Veronica Warnock (786-7490)

Background: Physical therapy is the examination and evaluation of individuals that have functional limitations in movement in order to determine a therapeutic plan and assess ongoing intervention. Physical therapy may only be performed by a licensed physical therapist or by a physical therapist assistant acting under the licensed physical therapists's direction. However, a person pursuing a degree as a physical therapist assistant who is satisfying supervised clinical education requirements is exempt from these physical therapy licensure requirements while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

Summary of Bill: In addition to a physical therapist, a physical therapist assistant may supervise physical therapist assistant students who are completing their clinical education requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

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: The 2007 physical therapist assistant licensure bill overlooked the need to allow physical therapist assistant students to work under the direct supervision of licensed physical therapist assistants. There are not enough licensed physical therapists in this state to supervise both physical therapist students and physical therapist assistant students. The lack of clinical spots has resulted in physical therapist assistant students extending their studies, paying additional tuition, and delaying entry into the work force while waiting for placements. Allowing physical therapist assistants to supervise physical therapist assistant students would help meet the demands of these students in finding clinical placements.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Robin Schoenfeld, Donette Parry, Melissa Johnson, Physical Therapy Association of WA.