

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1392

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Health Care*

Title: An act relating to acupuncture.

Brief Description: Making major changes to acupuncturist licensure.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Locke, Prince, Braddock, Ballard, Wang and Brekke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, March 13, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH CARE**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1392 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 11 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Casada, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cantwell; Edmondson; Franklin; Morris; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: The practice of acupuncture is regulated by law and persons holding themselves out as acupuncturists or as certified acupuncturists must be certified by the Department of Health.

Acupuncture is principally a health care service based on traditional Oriental medical theory by treating specific acupuncture points with needles and other modalities.

Currently, the practice of acupuncture does not include the use of exercise techniques based on Asian medical theory. Nor is there any express provision for the use of acupuncture assistants to practice ear acupuncture for the treatment of alcoholism or chemical dependency.

There is also no exemption provided from the requirement of certification for out-of-state acupuncturists on sabbatical in this state.

The acupuncture regulatory law is scheduled for termination on July 1, 1991, and repeal on July 1, 1992, under the Sunset law.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The acupuncture scope of practice is expanded to include exercise techniques based on traditional Asian theory.

An acupuncturist or acupuncture assistant, under the supervision of an acupuncturist, may practice ear acupuncture as an adjunct to the treatment of alcoholism or other drug dependency. The department is authorized to certify acupuncture assistants to practice ear acupuncture who complete an approved training program. The certification is renewable, and subject to the provisions of the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Acupuncturists from out-of-state on sabbatical in this state shall be granted inactive license status and pay a reduced license fee.

The scheduled Sunset termination and repeal dates for the acupuncture regulatory law are repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The inclusion of massage in the scope of practice is deleted. The level of regulation is restored to the current requirements of certification. An appropriation is included from the Health Professions Account. Technical and housekeeping amendments are made, including exemptions from certification for other regulated health professions.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: The use of acupuncture in treating the withdrawal symptoms and detoxification of patients with alcohol and drug dependency is reported to be quite favorable, and in some cases impressive. According to studies, patients who were treated expressed significantly less need for alcohol and opiates. There is a need to recognize the role that acupuncturists can play by employing this therapy for alcoholics and drug addicted patients seeking treatment. The Acupuncture Practice Act should be continued, as it is scheduled for Sunset termination and repeal shortly.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Locke, prime sponsor (pro); Mark Imlay, Acupuncture Association of Washington (pro); Paul Karsten, American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (pro); Mel Sorensen, Washington Physicians Service and Blue Cross of Washington/Alaska; Ken Stark, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); and Jeff Larsen, Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians.