

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6522

As of January 28, 2000

Title: An act relating to physical therapy.

Brief Description: Regulating the practice of physical therapy.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Costa, Gardner and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Jinnah Rose-McFadden (786-7444)

Background: Physical therapy is a regulated health profession in the state of Washington. State law defines the scope of practice of physical therapy and licensure requirements.

Recently there has been a national effort among physical therapists to create a model practice act. The model act seeks to clarify the scope of practice of physical therapy.

Summary of Bill: The licensure of all physical therapists is required; three exemptions are listed.

The techniques, devices, and medications that physical therapists may use in diagnosing and treating patients are defined.

Physical therapists are granted the authority to provide services to patients without prior referral. In addition, physical therapists may refer patients to other appropriate health care practitioners.

Physical therapists, who wish to perform spinal manipulation, must meet qualifications set out in rule by the Secretary of Health. This requirement expires January 1, 2005.

The Secretary of Health is granted the authority to adopt rules that: add to the list of devices and medications that may be used by physical therapists to treat patients; establish standards for the profession; establish qualifications for therapies that penetrate tissue; and establish the qualifications necessary to perform spinal manipulation.

Guidance on confidentiality issues is provided. Patient consent is required prior to the disclosure of records, maintained by physical therapists, to a third party.

The public is provided with access to a complete list of licensed physical therapists, licensed physical therapist assistants, and official actions taken by the Board of Physical Therapy.

The prohibition of advertising spinal manipulation services by physical therapists is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2000.

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