

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1392

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*As Amended by the Senate*

**Title:** An act relating to acupuncture.

**Brief Description:** Making major changes to acupuncturist licensure.

**Sponsor(s):** By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Locke, Prince, Braddock, Ballard, Wang and Brekke).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Health Care, March 13, 1991, DPS;  
Appropriations, March 21, 1991, DPS(HC);  
Passed House, January 22, 1992, 97-0;  
Amended by Senate.

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**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).

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS**

**Majority Report:** *The substitute bill by Committee on Health Care be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 24 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Inslee, Vice Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Morton, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Belcher; Braddock; Brekke; Dorn; Ebersole; Ferguson; Hine; Lisk; May; Mielke; Nealey; Peery; Pruitt; H. Sommers; Sprenkle; Valle; Vance; Wang; and Wineberry.

**Minority Report:** *Without recommendation.* Signed by 1 member: Representative Rust.

**Staff:** Maureen Morris (786-7152).

**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 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.

**EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):** The original definition of acupuncture is restored, deleting inclusion of therapeutic breathing and exercise techniques. References to "Asian" are changed to "Oriental," descriptive of acupuncture medical theory and practice. The authority for both acupuncturists and acupuncture assistants to practice ear acupuncture as an adjunct to the treatment of alcoholism, as

well as the appropriation for establishing the certification program for acupuncture assistants, is deleted.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Appropriation:** Yes.

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

**Testimony For:** (Health Care): 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.

(Appropriations): Acupuncture can be an important part of substance abuse treatment. There is some evidence that it can help individuals overcome methadone dependency. This bill will enable King County to incorporate acupuncture into its substance abuse treatment programs.

**Testimony Against:** (Health Care): None.

(Appropriations): None.

**Witnesses:** (Health Care): 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.

(Appropriations): Steven Freng, King County Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

**VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE:**

Yeas 97; Excused 1

Excused: Representative Locke