
SENATE BILL 5248

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

By Senators Kastama, Keiser, Rockefeller, Brandland and Thibaudeau

Read first time 01/18/2005. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to physical therapy; amending RCW 18.74.005,
2 18.74.010, and 18.74.012; and adding new sections to chapter 18.74 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.74.005 and 1983 c 116 s 1 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (~~In order to safeguard the public safety and welfare, to protect~~
7 ~~the public from being misled by incompetent, unethical, and~~
8 ~~unauthorized persons, and to assure the highest degree of professional~~
9 ~~conduct and competency, it is~~) The purpose of this chapter ((to
10 strengthen existing regulation of persons offering physical therapy
11 services to the public)) is to protect the public health, safety, and
12 welfare, and to provide for state administrative control, supervision,
13 licensure, and regulation of the practice of physical therapy. It is
14 the intent of the legislature that only individuals who meet and
15 maintain prescribed standards of competence and conduct be allowed to
16 engage in the practice of physical therapy as defined and authorized by
17 this chapter.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.74.010 and 1997 c 275 s 8 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 (~~Unless the context otherwise requires,~~) The definitions in this
4 section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly
5 requires otherwise.

6 (1) "Board" means the board of physical therapy created by RCW
7 18.74.020.

8 (2) "Department" means the department of health.

9 (3) "Physical therapy" means the (~~treatment of any bodily or~~
10 ~~mental condition of any person by the use of the physical, chemical,~~
11 ~~and other properties of heat, cold, air, light, water, electricity,~~
12 ~~sound, massage, and therapeutic exercise, which includes posture and~~
13 ~~rehabilitation procedures; the performance of tests and measurements of~~
14 ~~neuromuscular function as an aid to the diagnosis or treatment of any~~
15 ~~human condition; performance of treatments on the basis of test~~
16 ~~findings after consultation with and periodic review by an authorized~~
17 ~~health care practitioner except as provided in RCW 18.74.012;~~
18 ~~supervision of selective forms of treatment by trained supportive~~
19 ~~personnel; and provision of consultative services for health,~~
20 ~~education, and community agencies. The use of Roentgen rays and radium~~
21 ~~for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, the use of electricity for~~
22 ~~surgical purposes, including cauterization, and the use of spinal~~
23 ~~manipulation or manipulative mobilization of the spine and its~~
24 ~~immediate articulations, are not included under the term "physical~~
25 ~~therapy" as used in this chapter)) care and services provided by or
26 under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist licensed by
27 the state. The use of Roentgen rays and radium for diagnostic and
28 therapeutic purposes, the use of electricity for surgical purposes,
29 including cauterization, and the use of spinal manipulation, or
30 manipulative mobilization of the spine and its immediate articulations,
31 are not included under the term "physical therapy" as used in this
32 chapter.~~

33 (4) "Physical therapist" means a person who (~~practices physical~~
34 ~~therapy as defined in this chapter but does not include massage~~
35 ~~operators as defined in RCW 18.108.010)) meets all the requirements of
36 this chapter and is licensed in this state to practice physical
37 therapy.~~

38 (5) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.

1 (6) Words importing the masculine gender may be applied to females.

2 (7) "Authorized health care practitioner" means and includes
3 licensed physicians, osteopathic physicians, chiropractors,
4 naturopaths, podiatric physicians and surgeons, dentists, and advanced
5 registered nurse practitioners: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That nothing herein
6 shall be construed as altering the scope of practice of such
7 practitioners as defined in their respective licensure laws.

8 (8) "Practice of physical therapy" is based on movement science and
9 means:

10 (a) Examining, evaluating, and testing individuals with mechanical,
11 physiological, and developmental impairments, functional limitations in
12 movement, and disability or other health and movement-related
13 conditions in order to determine a diagnosis, prognosis, plan of
14 therapeutic intervention, and to assess and document the ongoing
15 effects of intervention;

16 (b) Alleviating impairments and functional limitations in movement
17 by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions
18 that include therapeutic exercise; functional training related to
19 balance, posture, and movement to facilitate self-care and
20 reintegration into home, community, or work; manual therapy including
21 soft tissue and joint mobilization and manipulation; therapeutic
22 massage; assistive, adaptive, protective, and devices related to
23 postural control and mobility except as restricted by (c) of this
24 subsection; airway clearance techniques; physical agents or modalities;
25 mechanical and electrotherapeutic modalities; and patient-related
26 instruction;

27 (c) Training for, and the evaluation of, the function of a patient
28 wearing an orthosis or prosthesis as defined in RCW 18.200.010.
29 Physical therapists may cast in preparation for molding for orthoses
30 and provide those direct-formed and prefabricated upper limb, knee, and
31 ankle-foot orthoses, but not fracture orthoses except those for hand,
32 wrist, ankle, and foot fractures, and assistive technology devices
33 specified in RCW 18.200.010 as exemptions from the defined scope of
34 licensed orthotic and prosthetic services. It is the intent of the
35 legislature that the unregulated devices specified in RCW 18.200.010
36 are in the public domain to the extent that they may be provided in
37 common with individuals or other health providers, whether unregulated

1 or regulated under Title 18 RCW, without regard to any scope of
2 practice;

3 (d) Performing wound care services that is limited to sharp
4 debridement, debridement with other agents, dry dressings, wet
5 dressings, topical agents including enzymes, hydrotherapy, electrical
6 stimulation, ultrasound, and other similar treatments. Physical
7 therapists may not delegate sharp debridement. A physical therapist
8 may perform wound care services only by referral from or after
9 consultation with an authorized health care practitioner;

10 (e) Reducing the risk of injury, impairment, functional limitation,
11 and disability related to movement, including the promotion and
12 maintenance of fitness, health, and quality of life in all age
13 populations; and

14 (f) Engaging in administration, consultation, education, and
15 research.

16 (9)(a) "Physical therapist assistant" means a person who has
17 successfully completed a board-approved physical therapist assistant
18 program.

19 (b) "Physical therapy aide" means a person who is involved in
20 direct physical therapy patient care who does not meet the definition
21 of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant and receives
22 ongoing on-the-job training.

23 (c) "Other assistive personnel" means other trained or educated
24 health care personnel, not defined in (a) or (b) of this subsection,
25 who perform specific designated tasks related to physical therapy under
26 the supervision of a physical therapist. At the direction of the
27 supervising physical therapist, and if properly credentialed and not
28 prohibited by any other law, other assistive personnel may be
29 identified by the title specific to their training or education.

30 (10) "On-site supervision" means the supervising physical therapist
31 must (a) be continuously on-site and present in the department or
32 facility where assistive personnel or holders of interim permits are
33 performing services; (b) be immediately available to assist the person
34 being supervised in the services being performed; and (c) maintain
35 continued involvement in appropriate aspects of each treatment session
36 in which a component of treatment is delegated to assistive personnel.

37 (11) "Sharp debridement" means the removal of devitalized tissue

1 from a wound with scissors, scalpel, and tweezers without anesthesia.
2 "Sharp debridement" does not mean surgical debridement.

3 **Sec. 3.** RCW 18.74.012 and 2000 c 171 s 24 are each amended to read
4 as follows:

5 ~~((Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 18.74.010(3),))~~ A
6 consultation and periodic review by an authorized health care
7 practitioner is not required for treatment of neuromuscular or
8 musculoskeletal conditions(~~(: PROVIDED, That a physical therapist may
9 only provide treatment utilizing orthoses that support, align, prevent,
10 or correct any structural problems intrinsic to the foot or ankle by
11 referral or consultation from an authorized health care practitioner)~~)).

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) It is unlawful for any person to
13 practice or in any manner hold himself or herself out to practice
14 physical therapy or designate himself or herself as a physical
15 therapist, unless he or she is licensed in accordance with this
16 chapter.

17 (2) This chapter does not restrict persons licensed under any other
18 law of this state from engaging in the profession or practice for which
19 they are licensed, if they are not representing themselves to be
20 physical therapists or providers of physical therapy.

21 (3) The following persons are exempt from licensure as physical
22 therapists under this chapter when engaged in the following activities:

23 (a) A person who is pursuing a course of study leading to a degree
24 as a physical therapist in an approved professional education program
25 and is satisfying supervised clinical education requirements related to
26 his or her physical therapy education while under on-site supervision
27 of a licensed physical therapist;

28 (b) A physical therapist while practicing in the United States
29 armed services, United States public health service, or veterans
30 administration as based on requirements under federal regulations for
31 state licensure of health care providers; and

32 (c) A physical therapist licensed in another United States
33 jurisdiction, or a foreign-educated physical therapist credentialed in
34 another country, performing physical therapy as part of teaching or
35 participating in an educational seminar of no more than sixty days in
36 a calendar year.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) No person may practice or in any manner
2 hold himself or herself out to be engaging in the practice of physical
3 therapy or designate himself or herself as a physical therapist unless
4 licensed as a physical therapist in accordance with this chapter.

5 (2) A physical therapist licensed under this chapter is fully
6 authorized to practice physical therapy as defined in this chapter.

7 (3) A physical therapist shall refer persons under his or her care
8 to appropriate health care practitioners if the physical therapist has
9 reasonable cause to believe symptoms or conditions are present that
10 require services beyond the scope of practice under this chapter or
11 when physical therapy is contraindicated.

12 (4) Physical therapists shall adhere to the recognized standards of
13 ethics of the physical therapy profession and as further established by
14 rule.

15 (5) A physical therapist may perform and interpret
16 electroneuromyographic examinations for the purpose of testing
17 neuromuscular function only by referral from an authorized health care
18 provider and only upon demonstration of further education and training
19 in electroneuromyographic examinations as established by rule.
20 Physical therapists who perform and interpret electroneuromyographic
21 examinations prior to the effective date of this section may continue
22 to do so until rules are established. The performance and
23 interpretation of an electroneuromyographic examination by a physical
24 therapist does not constitute a diagnosis of a medical condition.

25 (6) A physical therapist licensed under this chapter may purchase,
26 store, and administer medications such as hydrocortisone, fluocinonide,
27 topical anesthetics, silver sulfadiazine, lidocaine, magnesium sulfate,
28 zinc oxide, and other similar medications, and may administer such
29 other drugs or medications as prescribed by an authorized health care
30 provider. A pharmacist who dispenses such drugs to a licensed physical
31 therapist is not liable for any adverse reactions caused by any method
32 of use by the physical therapist.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) Physical therapists are responsible for
34 patient care given by assistive personnel under their supervision. A
35 physical therapist may delegate to assistive personnel and supervise
36 selected acts, tasks, or procedures that fall within the scope of

1 physical therapy practice but do not exceed the education or training
2 of the assistive personnel.

3 (2) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to prohibit other
4 licensed health care providers from using the services of physical
5 therapist assistants, physical therapist aides, or other assistive
6 personnel as long as the licensed health care provider is responsible
7 for the activities of such assistants, aides, and other personnel and
8 provides appropriate supervision.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 4 through 6 of this act are each
10 added to chapter 18.74 RCW.

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