

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1339

As of February 25, 2014

Title: An act relating to East Asian medicine practitioners.

Brief Description: Clarifying the scope of practice for East Asian medicine practitioners and removing certain referral requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Tharinger, Angel, Cody, Harris, Jinkins, Green and Moscoso.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/25/13, 92-0; 2/03/14, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 3/14/13, 3/18/13 [DP]; 2/20/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Bailey, Cleveland, Ericksen, Frockt, Keiser, Parlette and Schlicher.

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: East Asian medicine is a health care service utilizing East Asian medicine diagnosis and treatment to promote health and treat organic or functional disorders. East Asian medicine includes the following: acupuncture; the use of electrical, mechanical, or magnetic devices to stimulate acupuncture points or meridians; moxibustion; acupressure; cupping; dermal friction technique; infra-red; sonopuncture; laserpuncture; aquapuncture; dietary advice and health education based on East Asian medical theory; breathing, relaxation, and East Asian exercise techniques; qi gong; East Asian massage and Tui na; and superficial heat and cold therapies.

The Department of Health (DOH) licenses East Asian medicine practitioners. A licensed East Asian medicine practitioner must develop a written plan for consultation, emergency transfer, and referral to other health care practitioners operating within their scopes of practice. Practitioners must submit the plan to DOH at initial licensure and for renewal. DOH may withhold the license if the plan fails to meet DOH standards.

Reflexology is a health care service involving the application of pressure with fingers to the lower one-third of the extremities, feet, hands, and outer ears. Beginning July 1, 2013,

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persons practicing reflexology must be at least 18 years of age and certified by DOH, which requires successful completion of a course of study in reflexology and an examination.

Summary of Bill: Reflexology is added to the scope of practice of an East Asian medicine practitioner. The requirement that an East Asian medicine practitioner develop a written plan for consultation, emergency transfer, and referral is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

Testimony From 2014 Regular Session.

PRO: As insurance coverage expands, it is important to also expand access to providers. This bill is part of an integrated medicine approach. This bill streamlines government, increases efficiency, and clarifies that reflexology is part of the current scope of practice.

Testimony From 2013 Regular Session.

PRO: This bill removes a redundant and unnecessary reporting requirement. It is good policy and will expand access to health care during a time when we need more health care practitioners. This bill results in a savings of \$20,000 per year and provides clarification of the scope of practice of East Asian medical practitioners. Additional requirements that address public safety are in current law. East Asian medical practitioners perform some of the activities of reflexologists and adding this to the scope of practice of East Asian medical practitioners is supported by the reflexologists. Relating to the referral agreements, DOH is now requiring that the licenses be independently signed every year, which prevents online renewals.

Persons Testifying:

Persons Testifying From 2014 Regular Session.

PRO: Representative Tharinger, prime sponsor; Curtis Eschels, WA East Asian Medicine Assn.

Persons Testifying From 2013 Regular Session.

PRO: Representative Tharinger, prime sponsor; Leslie Emerick, Curtis Eschels, WA East Asian Medicine Assn.