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**Health Care & Wellness Committee**

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**HB 1727**

**Brief Description:** Permitting nursing assistants to perform simple care tasks under indirect supervision.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Schmick, Cody and Short.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Permits a nursing assistant employed in a health care facility that provides services in a health professional shortage area to take and record blood pressure and vital signs under the indirect supervision of a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse.

**Hearing Date:** 2/3/15

**Staff:** Alexa Silver (786-7190).

**Background:**

Nursing Assistants.

Nursing assistants assist in the delivery of nursing and nursing-related activities to patient in a health care facility under the direction and supervision of a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse. The Department of Health (DOH) registers nursing assistants and certifies those who complete required education and training as determined by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Nursing Commission). "Health care facility" is defined as a nursing home, hospital, hospice care facility, home health care agency, hospice agency, or other entity for delivery of health care services as defined by the Nursing Commission.

A registered nurse may delegate nursing care tasks that are within the nurse's scope of practice to other individuals where the nurse finds it to be in the patient's best interest. Before delegating a nursing care task, the registered nurse must determine the competency level of the person to perform the delegated task, evaluate the appropriateness of the delegation, and supervise the person performing the delegated task. With some exceptions, registered nurses may not delegate

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tasks requiring nursing judgment, substantial skill, the administration of medications, or the piercing or severing of tissues.

#### Health Professional Shortage Areas.

The DOH determines health professional shortage areas in the state. A health professional shortage area is an area where a short supply of credentialed health care professionals, due either to geographic maldistribution or an inadequate number of providers in a specialty care area, jeopardizes patient care and poses a threat to public health and safety. In designating health professional shortage areas, the DOH may be guided by federal standards for medically underserved areas, medically underserved populations, and health manpower shortage areas.

#### Licensed Service Providers.

Under the Community Mental Health Services Act, a "licensed service provider" is a licensed entity or an entity that meets state minimum standards as a result of accreditation by a recognized behavioral health accrediting body.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

A nursing assistant employed in a health care facility that provides services in a health professional shortage area may take and record blood pressure and vital signs under the indirect supervision of a registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse (LPN). "Indirect supervision" means that the RN or LPN is not on the premises but has given written or oral instructions for the care and treatment of the patient.

For purposes of the nursing assistant law, the definition of "health care facility" includes licensed service providers under the Community Mental Health Services Act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.