

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1378

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the supervision of medical assistants.

Brief Description: Concerning the supervision of medical assistants.

Sponsors: Representatives Ybarra, Cody and Dolan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/8/21, 2/10/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/23/21, 96-0.

Passed Senate: 3/30/21, 49-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows medical assistants assisting with a telemedicine visit to be supervised through interactive audio and video telemedicine technology.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Davis, Harris, Macri, Maycumber, Riccelli, Rude, Simmons, Stonier, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

The Department of Health licenses four different types of medical assistants: medical

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assistants-certified, medical assistants-registered, medical assistants-phlebotomist, and medical assistants-hemodialysis technician. Each type of medical assistant must be supervised by a health care practitioner, including a physician, an osteopathic physician, a podiatric physician, a registered nurse, an advanced registered nurse practitioner, a naturopath, a physician assistant, or an optometrist. In most cases, the health care practitioner must be physically present and immediately available. The health care practitioner does not need to be present during procedures to withdraw blood, but must be immediately available.

Summary of Bill:

During a telemedicine visit, supervision over a medical assistant assisting the health care practitioner with the telemedicine visit may be provided through interactive audio and video telemedicine technology.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately, except for section 2, which, because of a double amendment, takes effect July 1, 2022.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) In rural areas of the state, there are fewer health care providers and people often have to travel great distances to access health care. Seasonal farm workers often have no way to get to hospitals and clinics, which may be as much as 50 miles away. This often means people do not have access to essential services like primary care. This bill will allow medical assistants to receive supervision safely through telemedicine. This bill will enable medical assistants to provide services, like taking vital signs, where migrant farm workers live and work. This is a critical access issue. Without this bill it will be impossible to provide needed primary care in rural areas.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ybarra, prime sponsor; and Sandra Galeana and Sheila Berschauer, Moses Lake Community Health Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.