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**SENATE BILL 5184**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Rivers, Cleveland, Braun, Dhingra, Mullet, Muzzall, and Rolfes

AN ACT Relating to licensure of anesthesiologist assistants; amending RCW 18.130.040, 18.130.040, and 18.120.020; adding a new chapter to Title 18 RCW; providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Anesthesiologist" means a physician licensed under chapter 18.71 or 18.57 RCW who has completed a residency in anesthesiology approved by the American board of anesthesiology or the American osteopathic board of anesthesiology.

(2) "Anesthesiologist assistant" means a person who is licensed by the commission to assist in developing and implementing anesthesia care plans for patients under the supervision of an anesthesiologist or group of anesthesiologists approved by the commission to supervise such assistant.

(3) "Assists" means the anesthesiologist assistant personally performs those duties and responsibilities delegated by the anesthesiologist. Delegated services must be consistent with the delegating physician's education, training, experience, and active practice. Delegated services must be of the type that a reasonable and prudent physician would find within the scope of sound medical judgment to delegate.

(4) "Commission" means the Washington medical commission.

(5) "Practice medicine" has the meaning defined in RCW 18.71.011.

(6) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.

(7) "Supervision" means the immediate availability of the medically directing anesthesiologist for consultation and direction of the activities of the anesthesiologist assistant. A medically directing anesthesiologist is immediately available if they are in physical proximity that allows the anesthesiologist to reestablish direct contact with the patient to meet medical needs and any urgent or emergent clinical problems.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The commission shall adopt rules fixing the qualifications and the educational and training requirements for licensure as an anesthesiologist assistant. The requirements shall include completion of an anesthesiologist assistant program accredited by the commission on accreditation of allied health education programs, or successor organization, and within one year successfully taking and passing an examination administered by the national commission for the certification of anesthesiologist assistants or other examination approved by the commission.

(b) The commission shall adopt rules for the issuance of a temporary license to any person who successfully completes an anesthesiologist assistant program accredited by the commission on accreditation of allied health education programs, or successor organization, but has not passed a certification examination. To allow the opportunity to take the next available certification examination, any temporary license issued pursuant to this subsection shall be issued for a period not to exceed one year and subject to conditions as determined by the commission in rule.

(2) Applicants for licensure shall file an application with the commission on a form prepared by the secretary with the approval of the commission, detailing the education, training, and experience of the applicant and such other information as the commission may require. The application shall be accompanied by a fee determined by the secretary as provided in RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280. Each applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the commission of the following:

(a) That the applicant has completed an accredited anesthesiologist assistant program approved by the commission and is eligible to take the examination approved by the commission; and

(b) That the applicant is physically and mentally capable of practicing as an anesthesiologist assistant with reasonable skill and safety. The commission may require an applicant to submit to such examination or examinations as it deems necessary to determine an applicant's physical or mental capability, or both, to safely practice as an anesthesiologist assistant.

(3)(a) The commission may approve, deny, or take other disciplinary action upon the application for a license as provided in the uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW.

(b) The license shall be renewed as determined under RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280. The commission shall request licensees to submit information about their current professional practice at the time of license renewal and licensees must provide the information requested.

(4) No person shall practice as an anesthesiologist assistant or represent that they are a "certified anesthesiologist assistant" or "anesthesiologist assistant" or "C.A.A." or "A.A." without a license granted by the commission.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The commission shall adopt rules establishing the requirements and limitations on the practice by and supervision of anesthesiologist assistants, including the number of anesthesiologist assistants an anesthesiologist may supervise concurrently. Unless approved by the commission, a physician may not concurrently supervise more than four specific, individual anesthesiologist assistants at any one time.

(2) The commission may adopt rules for the arrangement of other anesthesiologists to serve as backup or on-call supervising anesthesiologists for multiple anesthesiologist assistants.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) An anesthesiologist assistant may assist with those duties and responsibilities delegated to them by the supervising anesthesiologist, and for which they are competent to assist with based on their education, training, and experience. Duties which an anesthesiologist may delegate to an anesthesiologist assistant include but are not limited to:

(a) Assisting with preoperative anesthetic evaluations, postoperative anesthetic evaluations, and patient progress notes, all to be cosigned by the supervising physician within 24 hours;

(b) Administering and assisting with preoperative consultations;

(c) Under the supervising physician's consultation and direction, order perioperative pharmaceutical agents, medications, fluids, oxygen therapy, and respiratory therapy, to be used only at the facility where ordered, including but not limited to controlled substances, which may be administered prior to the cosignature of the supervising physician. The supervising physician may review and if required by the facility or institutional policy must cosign these orders in a timely manner;

(d) Changing or discontinuing a medical treatment plan, after consultation with the supervising physician;

(e) Obtaining informed consent for anesthesia or related procedures;

(f) Calibrating anesthesia delivery systems and obtaining and interpreting information from the systems and monitors, in consultation with an anesthesiologist;

(g) Assisting the supervising anesthesiologist with the implementation of medically accepted monitoring techniques;

(h) Assisting with basic and advanced airway interventions, including but not limited to endotracheal intubation, laryngeal mask insertion, and other advanced airways techniques;

(i) Establishing peripheral intravenous lines, including subcutaneous lidocaine use;

(j) Establishing radial and dorsalis pedis arterial lines and central lines;

(k) Assisting with general anesthesia, including induction, maintenance, and emergence;

(l) Assisting with procedures associated with general anesthesia, such as but not limited to gastric intubation;

(m) Administering intermittent vasoactive drugs and starting and titrating vasoactive infusions for the treatment of patient responses to anesthesia;

(n) Assisting with epidural, spinal, and intravenous regional anesthesia;

(o) Maintaining and managing established neuraxial and regional anesthesia;

(p) Assisting with monitored anesthesia care;

(q) Evaluating and managing patient controlled analgesia, epidural catheters, and peripheral nerve catheters;

(r) Obtaining venous and arterial blood samples;

(s) Assisting with, ordering, and interpreting appropriate preoperative, point of care, intraoperative, or postoperative diagnostic tests or procedures as authorized by the supervising anesthesiologist;

(t) Obtaining and administering perioperative anesthesia and related pharmaceutical agents including intravenous fluids and blood products;

(u) Participating in management of the patient while in the preoperative suite and recovery area;

(v) Providing assistance to a cardiopulmonary resuscitation team in response to a life-threatening situation;

(w) Participating in administrative, research, and clinical teaching activities as authorized by the supervising anesthesiologist; and

(x) Assisting with such other tasks not prohibited by law under the supervision of a licensed anesthesiologist that an anesthesiologist assistant has been trained and is proficient to assist with.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent an anesthesiologist assistant from having access to and being able to obtain drugs as directed by the supervising anesthesiologist.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  No anesthesiologist who supervises a licensed anesthesiologist assistant in accordance with and within the terms of any permission granted by the commission is considered as aiding and abetting an unlicensed person to practice medicine. The supervising anesthesiologist and anesthesiologist assistant shall retain professional and personal responsibility for any act which constitutes the practice of medicine as defined in RCW 18.71.011 when performed by the anesthesiologist assistant.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  An anesthesiologist assistant may sign and attest to any certificates, cards, forms, or other required documentation that the anesthesiologist assistant's supervising anesthesiologist may sign, provided that it is within the anesthesiologist assistant's scope of practice.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, governs the issuance and denial of licenses and the discipline of licensees under this chapter.

(2) The commission shall consult with the board of osteopathic medicine and surgery when investigating allegations of unprofessional conduct against a licensee who has a supervising anesthesiologist license under chapter 18.57 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.130.040 and 2021 c 179 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) This chapter applies only to the secretary and the boards and commissions having jurisdiction in relation to the professions licensed under the chapters specified in this section. This chapter does not apply to any business or profession not licensed under the chapters specified in this section.

(2)(a) The secretary has authority under this chapter in relation to the following professions:

(i) Dispensing opticians licensed and designated apprentices under chapter 18.34 RCW;

(ii) Midwives licensed under chapter 18.50 RCW;

(iii) Ocularists licensed under chapter 18.55 RCW;

(iv) Massage therapists and businesses licensed under chapter 18.108 RCW;

(v) Dental hygienists licensed under chapter 18.29 RCW;

(vi) Acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW;

(vii) Radiologic technologists certified and X-ray technicians registered under chapter 18.84 RCW;

(viii) Respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW;

(ix) Hypnotherapists and agency affiliated counselors registered and advisors and counselors certified under chapter 18.19 RCW;

(x) Persons licensed as mental health counselors, mental health counselor associates, marriage and family therapists, marriage and family therapist associates, social workers, social work associates—advanced, and social work associates—independent clinical under chapter 18.225 RCW;

(xi) Persons registered as nursing pool operators under chapter 18.52C RCW;

(xii) Nursing assistants registered or certified or medication assistants endorsed under chapter 18.88A RCW;

(xiii) Dietitians and nutritionists certified under chapter 18.138 RCW;

(xiv) Substance use disorder professionals, substance use disorder professional trainees, or co-occurring disorder specialists certified under chapter 18.205 RCW;

(xv) Sex offender treatment providers and certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers certified under chapter 18.155 RCW;

(xvi) Persons licensed and certified under chapter 18.73 RCW or RCW 18.71.205;

(xvii) Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under chapter 18.200 RCW;

(xviii) Surgical technologists registered under chapter 18.215 RCW;

(xix) Recreational therapists under chapter 18.230 RCW;

(xx) Animal massage therapists certified under chapter 18.240 RCW;

(xxi) Athletic trainers licensed under chapter 18.250 RCW;

(xxii) Home care aides certified under chapter 18.88B RCW;

(xxiii) Genetic counselors licensed under chapter 18.290 RCW;

(xxiv) Reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW;

(xxv) Medical assistants-certified, medical assistants-hemodialysis technician, medical assistants-phlebotomist, forensic phlebotomist, and medical assistants-registered certified and registered under chapter 18.360 RCW; and

(xxvi) Behavior analysts, assistant behavior analysts, and behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW.

(b) The boards and commissions having authority under this chapter are as follows:

(i) The podiatric medical board as established in chapter 18.22 RCW;

(ii) The chiropractic quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.25 RCW;

(iii) The dental quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.32 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.32 RCW, licenses and registrations issued under chapter 18.260 RCW, and certifications issued under chapter 18.350 RCW;

(iv) The board of hearing and speech as established in chapter 18.35 RCW;

(v) The board of examiners for nursing home administrators as established in chapter 18.52 RCW;

(vi) The optometry board as established in chapter 18.54 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.53 RCW;

(vii) The board of osteopathic medicine and surgery as established in chapter 18.57 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.57 RCW;

(viii) The pharmacy quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.64 RCW governing licenses issued under chapters 18.64 and 18.64A RCW;

(ix) The Washington medical commission as established in chapter 18.71 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under chapters 18.71 ((~~and~~)), 18.71A ((~~RCW~~)), and 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 11 of this act);

(x) The board of physical therapy as established in chapter 18.74 RCW;

(xi) The board of occupational therapy practice as established in chapter 18.59 RCW;

(xii) The nursing care quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.79 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under that chapter;

(xiii) The examining board of psychology and its disciplinary committee as established in chapter 18.83 RCW;

(xiv) The veterinary board of governors as established in chapter 18.92 RCW;

(xv) The board of naturopathy established in chapter 18.36A RCW, governing licenses and certifications issued under that chapter; and

(xvi) The board of denturists established in chapter 18.30 RCW.

(3) In addition to the authority to discipline license holders, the disciplining authority has the authority to grant or deny licenses. The disciplining authority may also grant a license subject to conditions.

(4) All disciplining authorities shall adopt procedures to ensure substantially consistent application of this chapter, the uniform disciplinary act, among the disciplining authorities listed in subsection (2) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.130.040 and 2022 c 217 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) This chapter applies only to the secretary and the boards and commissions having jurisdiction in relation to the professions licensed under the chapters specified in this section. This chapter does not apply to any business or profession not licensed under the chapters specified in this section.

(2)(a) The secretary has authority under this chapter in relation to the following professions:

(i) Dispensing opticians licensed and designated apprentices under chapter 18.34 RCW;

(ii) Midwives licensed under chapter 18.50 RCW;

(iii) Ocularists licensed under chapter 18.55 RCW;

(iv) Massage therapists and businesses licensed under chapter 18.108 RCW;

(v) Dental hygienists licensed under chapter 18.29 RCW;

(vi) Acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW;

(vii) Radiologic technologists certified and X-ray technicians registered under chapter 18.84 RCW;

(viii) Respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW;

(ix) Hypnotherapists and agency affiliated counselors registered and advisors and counselors certified under chapter 18.19 RCW;

(x) Persons licensed as mental health counselors, mental health counselor associates, marriage and family therapists, marriage and family therapist associates, social workers, social work associates—advanced, and social work associates—independent clinical under chapter 18.225 RCW;

(xi) Persons registered as nursing pool operators under chapter 18.52C RCW;

(xii) Nursing assistants registered or certified or medication assistants endorsed under chapter 18.88A RCW;

(xiii) Dietitians and nutritionists certified under chapter 18.138 RCW;

(xiv) Substance use disorder professionals, substance use disorder professional trainees, or co-occurring disorder specialists certified under chapter 18.205 RCW;

(xv) Sex offender treatment providers and certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers certified under chapter 18.155 RCW;

(xvi) Persons licensed and certified under chapter 18.73 RCW or RCW 18.71.205;

(xvii) Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under chapter 18.200 RCW;

(xviii) Surgical technologists registered under chapter 18.215 RCW;

(xix) Recreational therapists under chapter 18.230 RCW;

(xx) Animal massage therapists certified under chapter 18.240 RCW;

(xxi) Athletic trainers licensed under chapter 18.250 RCW;

(xxii) Home care aides certified under chapter 18.88B RCW;

(xxiii) Genetic counselors licensed under chapter 18.290 RCW;

(xxiv) Reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW;

(xxv) Medical assistants-certified, medical assistants-hemodialysis technician, medical assistants-phlebotomist, forensic phlebotomist, and medical assistants-registered certified and registered under chapter 18.360 RCW;

(xxvi) Behavior analysts, assistant behavior analysts, and behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW; and

(xxvii) Birth doulas certified under chapter 18.47 RCW.

(b) The boards and commissions having authority under this chapter are as follows:

(i) The podiatric medical board as established in chapter 18.22 RCW;

(ii) The chiropractic quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.25 RCW;

(iii) The dental quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.32 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.32 RCW, licenses and registrations issued under chapter 18.260 RCW, and certifications issued under chapter 18.350 RCW;

(iv) The board of hearing and speech as established in chapter 18.35 RCW;

(v) The board of examiners for nursing home administrators as established in chapter 18.52 RCW;

(vi) The optometry board as established in chapter 18.54 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.53 RCW;

(vii) The board of osteopathic medicine and surgery as established in chapter 18.57 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.57 RCW;

(viii) The pharmacy quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.64 RCW governing licenses issued under chapters 18.64 and 18.64A RCW;

(ix) The Washington medical commission as established in chapter 18.71 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under chapters 18.71 ((~~and~~)), 18.71A ((~~RCW~~)), and 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 11 of this act);

(x) The board of physical therapy as established in chapter 18.74 RCW;

(xi) The board of occupational therapy practice as established in chapter 18.59 RCW;

(xii) The nursing care quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.79 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under that chapter;

(xiii) The examining board of psychology and its disciplinary committee as established in chapter 18.83 RCW;

(xiv) The veterinary board of governors as established in chapter 18.92 RCW;

(xv) The board of naturopathy established in chapter 18.36A RCW, governing licenses and certifications issued under that chapter; and

(xvi) The board of denturists established in chapter 18.30 RCW.

(3) In addition to the authority to discipline license holders, the disciplining authority has the authority to grant or deny licenses. The disciplining authority may also grant a license subject to conditions.

(4) All disciplining authorities shall adopt procedures to ensure substantially consistent application of this chapter, the uniform disciplinary act, among the disciplining authorities listed in subsection (2) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.120.020 and 2020 c 80 s 22 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Applicant group" includes any health professional group or organization, any individual, or any other interested party which proposes that any health professional group not presently regulated be regulated or which proposes to substantially increase the scope of practice of the profession.

(2) "Certificate" and "certification" mean a voluntary process by which a statutory regulatory entity grants recognition to an individual who (a) has met certain prerequisite qualifications specified by that regulatory entity, and (b) may assume or use "certified" in the title or designation to perform prescribed health professional tasks.

(3) "Grandfather clause" means a provision in a regulatory statute applicable to practitioners actively engaged in the regulated health profession prior to the effective date of the regulatory statute which exempts the practitioners from meeting the prerequisite qualifications set forth in the regulatory statute to perform prescribed occupational tasks.

(4) "Health professions" means and includes the following health and health-related licensed or regulated professions and occupations: Podiatric medicine and surgery under chapter 18.22 RCW; chiropractic under chapter 18.25 RCW; dental hygiene under chapter 18.29 RCW; dentistry under chapter 18.32 RCW; denturism under chapter 18.30 RCW; dental anesthesia assistants under chapter 18.350 RCW; dispensing opticians under chapter 18.34 RCW; hearing instruments under chapter 18.35 RCW; naturopaths under chapter 18.36A RCW; embalming and funeral directing under chapter 18.39 RCW; midwifery under chapter 18.50 RCW; nursing home administration under chapter 18.52 RCW; optometry under chapters 18.53 and 18.54 RCW; ocularists under chapter 18.55 RCW; osteopathic medicine and surgery under chapter 18.57 RCW; pharmacy under chapters 18.64 and 18.64A RCW; medicine under chapters 18.71 and 18.71A RCW; emergency medicine under chapter 18.73 RCW; physical therapy under chapter 18.74 RCW; practical nurses under chapter 18.79 RCW; psychologists under chapter 18.83 RCW; registered nurses under chapter 18.79 RCW; occupational therapists licensed under chapter 18.59 RCW; respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW; veterinarians and veterinary technicians under chapter 18.92 RCW; massage therapists under chapter 18.108 RCW; acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW; persons registered under chapter 18.19 RCW; persons licensed as mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers under chapter 18.225 RCW; dietitians and nutritionists certified by chapter 18.138 RCW; radiologic technicians under chapter 18.84 RCW; nursing assistants registered or certified under chapter 18.88A RCW; reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW; medical assistants-certified, medical assistants-hemodialysis technician, medical assistants-phlebotomist, forensic phlebotomist, and medical assistants-registered certified and registered under chapter 18.360 RCW; ((~~and~~)) licensed behavior analysts, licensed assistant behavior analysts, and certified behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW; and anesthesiologist assistants licensed under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 11 of this act).

(5) "Inspection" means the periodic examination of practitioners by a state agency in order to ascertain whether the practitioners' occupation is being carried out in a fashion consistent with the public health, safety, and welfare.

(6) "Legislative committees of reference" means the standing legislative committees designated by the respective rules committees of the senate and house of representatives to consider proposed legislation to regulate health professions not previously regulated.

(7) "License," "licensing," and "licensure" mean permission to engage in a health profession which would otherwise be unlawful in the state in the absence of the permission. A license is granted to those individuals who meet prerequisite qualifications to perform prescribed health professional tasks and for the use of a particular title.

(8) "Practitioner" means an individual who (a) has achieved knowledge and skill by practice, and (b) is actively engaged in a specified health profession.

(9) "Professional license" means an individual, nontransferable authorization to carry on a health activity based on qualifications which include: (a) Graduation from an accredited or approved program, and (b) acceptable performance on a qualifying examination or series of examinations.

(10) "Public member" means an individual who is not, and never was, a member of the health profession being regulated or the spouse of a member, or an individual who does not have and never has had a material financial interest in either the rendering of the health professional service being regulated or an activity directly related to the profession being regulated.

(11) "Registration" means the formal notification which, prior to rendering services, a practitioner shall submit to a state agency setting forth the name and address of the practitioner; the location, nature and operation of the health activity to be practiced; and, if required by the regulatory entity, a description of the service to be provided.

(12) "Regulatory entity" means any board, commission, agency, division, or other unit or subunit of state government which regulates one or more professions, occupations, industries, businesses, or other endeavors in this state.

(13) "State agency" includes every state office, department, board, commission, regulatory entity, and agency of the state, and, where provided by law, programs and activities involving less than the full responsibility of a state agency.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 18 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 8 of this act expires October 1, 2023.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 9 of this act takes effect October 1, 2023.

**--- END ---**