



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

Version: Final

Date: 11/10/2016

Bill Number

Senate Bill 16-158

Sponsors

Senator Lundberg
Representative Primavera

Short Title

***Physician Duties Delegated To
Physician Assistant***

Research Analyst

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Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill. The bill became effective August 10, 2016.

Summary

The bill clarifies and expands the duties that a physician may delegate to a physician assistant within his or her scope of practice, including allowing physician assistants to:

- issue certain statements verifying a medical condition;
- obtain Level I accreditation in workers' compensation matters;
- qualify as providing direct access to a health care provider under health insurance plans in regards to several conditions where direct access is mandated in law;
- serve as a public health director for a county or district board of health; and
- issue certificates of immunization or medical exemptions to immunizations for K-12 and university students.

In addition, the bill requires that prescriptions for all controlled substances issued by a physician assistant be imprinted with the name of the supervising physician or podiatrist. All other prescriptions issued by physician assistants must be imprinted with the name and address of the facility where the physician assistant practices. The bill also increases the number of physician assistants a podiatrist can supervise from two to four.

Background

Physician assistants are health care professionals licensed by the State Board of

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Medical Examiners. In order to be a licensed physician assistant, an applicant must be at least 21 years old and have successfully completed both an education program for physician assistants and the national certifying examination for physician assistants, but the board may determine whether a specific applicant has education, experience, or training in health care that is sufficient to be accepted in lieu of these requirements. These professionals may provide medical services as authorized by a supervising physician and that are consistent with board rules. Duties that may be performed by a physician assistant include conducting physical exams, diagnosing and treating illnesses, writing prescriptions, assisting in surgery, and making rounds in hospitals and nursing homes.

Senate Action

Senate Health and Human Service Committee (March 30, 2016). At the hearing, representatives of the Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants, the Colorado Medical Society, and a member of the public testified in support of the bill. A representative of the Division of Workers' Compensation in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment testified in a neutral capacity on the bill.

The committee adopted amendment L.001 and referred the bill, as amended, to the Senate Committee of the Whole. Amendment L.001 clarifies the scope of practice limitations for physician assistants.

Senate second reading (April 5, 2016). The Senate adopted the Senate Health and Human Service committee report and amendment No. 2. Amendment No. 2 requires that all prescriptions for controlled substance, rather than only those for schedule II controlled substance, contain the name of the physician assistant's supervising physician or podiatrist. The Senate passed the bill on second reading, as amended.

Senate third reading (April 6, 2016). The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

House Action

House Public Health Care and Human Service Committee (April 19, 2016). At the committee hearing, representatives of Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants and the Colorado Community Health Network testified in support of the bill. A representative of the Division of Workers' Compensation in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment testified in a neutral capacity on the bill.

The committee adopted amendment L.004 and referred the bill, as amended, to the House Committee of the Whole. Amendment L.004 corrected a citation to refer to all controlled substances prescribed by physician assistants rather than just schedule II controlled substances.

House second reading (April 22, 2016). The House adopted the House Public Health and Human Service committee report and passed the bill on second reading, as amended.

House third reading (April 25, 2016). The House passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.