



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, Second Regular Session

REVISED

AMENDED

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1267

physical therapy assistants; students; supervision

Purpose

Specifies that a physical therapist is responsible for patient care provided by student physical therapists and student physical therapist assistants under the supervision of the physical therapist. Requires the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and its contractors to provide an exception to any visit limitation for a member whose condition indicates that the member requires continued skilled therapy. Modifies and defines terms related to the practice of physical therapy.

Background

Physical therapy is the care and services provided by or under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist. The physical therapist is responsible for managing all aspects of the physical therapy care of each patient and the patient care given by assistive personnel under the physical therapist's supervision. The physical therapist may delegate to assistive personnel and supervise selected acts, tasks or procedures that fall within the scope of physical therapy practice, but that do not exceed the education or training of the assistive personnel. *Assistive personnel*, includes: 1) physical therapist assistants; 2) physical therapy aides; and 3) other assistive personnel who are trained or educated health care providers who perform specific designated tasks related to physical therapy under the supervision of a physical therapist. Assistive personnel does not include personnel assisting other licensed health care professionals in performing delegable treatment responsibilities within the personnel's scope of practice (A.R.S. §§ [32-2001](#) and [32-2043](#)).

The Arizona State Board of Physical Therapy (Board) was established to regulate the practice of physical therapy in Arizona, certify qualified applicants and take enforcement action and disciplinary action as necessary. Board duties include: 1) evaluating, licensing and certifying qualified applicants; 2) providing national examinations and determining passing scores for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants; 3) establishing mechanisms to assess continued professional competence of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants; 4) maintaining a current list of all persons regulated by the Board; 5) publishing final disciplinary actions taken against a licensee or certificate holder; 6) entering into contracts for services as necessary to carry out the Board's duties; and 7) providing information to the public regarding the Board, its processes and consumer rights ([A.R.S. § 32-2003](#)).

The Joint Legislative Budget Committee fiscal note on S.B.1267 estimates an ongoing impact of \$217,800 to the state General Fund to exempt AHCCCS recipients from physical therapy visit limitations ([JLBC](#)).

Provisions

1. Specifies that a physical therapist is responsible for patient care given by student physical therapists and student physical therapist assistants under the physical therapist's supervision, in addition to the care provided by assistive personnel.
2. Requires AHCCCS and its contractors to provide an exception to any visit limitation for a member whose condition is justified by documentation that indicates that the member requires continued skilled therapy.
3. Replaces the term *certification* with *licensure* as it relates to physical therapy.
4. Requires the Board to issue a license to a certified physical therapist assistant on the date of the physical therapist assistant's certification renewal.
5. Includes supervision provided through telehealth in the definition of *on-site supervision*.
6. Modifies the definition of *practice of physical therapy* to include ordering imaging and laboratory tests.
7. Defines *student physical therapist* as a person who is enrolled in a Doctor of Physical Therapy program that is accredited by or has candidate status by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.
8. Defines *student physical therapist assistant* as a person who is enrolled in an academic physical therapist assistant program that is accredited by or has candidate status by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.
9. Specifies that assistive personnel does not include student physical therapists or student physical therapist assistants.
10. Requires Legislative Council to prepare proposed conforming legislation for the Fifty-Seventh Legislature, first regular session.
11. Makes technical and conforming changes.
12. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Amendments Adopted by Committee

1. Requires the AHCCCS and its contractors to provide an exception to any visit limitation for a member whose condition is justified by documentation that indicates that the member requires continued skilled therapy.
2. Replaces the term *certification* with *licensure* as it relates to physical therapy.
3. Requires the Board of Physical Therapy to issue a license to a certified physical therapist assistant on the date of the physical therapist assistant's certification renewal.
4. Modifies definitions of *practice of physical therapy* and *on-site supervision*.

5. Requires Legislative Council to prepare proposed conforming legislation.

Revised

- Updates the fiscal impact statement.

Senate Action

HHS 2/6/24 DPA 7-0-0

Prepared by Senate Research

February 19, 2024

MM/KS/slp