

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1073

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to medical assistants.

Brief Description: Concerning medical assistants.

Sponsors: Representatives Harris, Tharinger, Ryu, Leavitt, Macri, Caldier, Santos and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/20/23, 1/27/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the expiration of a medical assistant-certified interim permit to the issuance of a medical assistant-certified certification.
- Allows an applicant for a medical assistant-phlebotomist credential who has completed the training program to work, under the level of supervision required for the training program, for a period of up to 180 days after filing their application.
- Allows a medical assistant-certified to establish intravenous lines under the supervision of a health care practitioner if certain minimum standards are met.
- Authorizes a medical assistant-registered to prepare patients for, and assist with, examinations, procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries that use minimal sedation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Riccelli, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Hutchins,

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Bronoske, Davis, Harris, Macri, Maycumber, Mosbrucker, Orwall, Simmons, Stonier and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Graham.

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

The Department of Health licenses several different types of medical assistants, including medical assistants-certified and medical assistants-phlebotomist.

Certification.

A person meets the qualifications for certification as a medical assistant-certified if they satisfactorily complete a medical assistant training program approved by the Secretary of Health (Secretary), pass an examination approved by the Secretary, and meet any additional qualifications established by the Secretary in rule. A person who has completed the other requirements but has not passed the examination may practice as a medical assistant-certified under an interim permit. The permit expires upon passage of the examination or after one year, whichever occurs first, and may not be renewed.

A person meets the qualifications for certification as a medical assistant-phlebotomist if they meet the qualifications adopted by the Secretary in rule.

Authorized Duties and Supervision.

A medical assistant-certified may perform authorized duties only when delegated by, and under the supervision of, a health care practitioner. For tasks requiring supervision, the supervising health care practitioner must generally be physically present and immediately available in the facility. When administering intravenous injections for diagnostic or therapeutic agents, a medical assistant-certified must be under the direct visual supervision of a health care practitioner and meet certain minimum standards established by the Secretary in rule.

A medical assistant-registered may perform authorized duties only when delegated by, and under the supervision of, a health care practitioner. Authorized duties include preparing patients for, and assisting with, routine and specialty examinations, procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries utilizing no more than local anesthetic.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Certification.

An interim permit for a medical assistant-certified expires upon passage of the examination

and issuance of a certification, or after one year, whichever occurs first.

An applicant for a medical assistant-phlebotomist credential who has completed their training program is allowed to work, under the level of supervision required for the training program, for a period of up to 180 days after filing their application.

Authorized Duties and Supervision.

A medical assistant-certified may establish intravenous lines for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, without administering medications, under the supervision of a health care practitioner if the medical assistant-certified meets minimum standards established by the Secretary in rule.

A medical assistant-registered may prepare patients for, and assist with, routine and specialty examinations, procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries, including those with minimal sedation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill modifies requirements pertaining to applicants for medical assistant-phlebotomist credentials to allow an applicant who has completed their training program to work, under the level of supervision required for the training program, for a period of up to 180 days after filing their application.

The substitute bill also authorizes a medical assistant-certified to establish intravenous lines, without administering medications, under the supervision of a health care practitioner, but restores the requirement that a medical assistant-certified may administer intravenous injections only under the direct visual supervision of a health care practitioner.

The substitute bill removes the limitation on medical assistants-registered preparing patients for, and assisting with, examinations, procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries that utilize more than local anesthetic. The substitute bill authorizes medical assistants-registered to prepare patients for, and assist with, examinations, procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries that use minimal sedation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will help reduce discrepancies in supervision and licensing requirements between Washington and Oregon and help improve access to medical care. Medicine today is a team sport, and all practitioners need to be able to operate at the highest level. This bill will help have more people available to do important jobs, like drawing blood, administering intravenous injections, and giving medications. It is more efficient for physician assistants to be able to complete certain tasks without direct visual supervision. Medical assistants-phlebotomist serve a very important role.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The bill makes concerning changes to the ability of medical assistants to administer drugs via intravenous lines. There is some worry from physicians about the ability of medical assistants to determine when the supervising health care practitioner needs to be retrieved.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Paul Harris, prime sponsor; and Mark Zeitzer, ZoomCare.

(Other) Sean Graham, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.