

HCS HB 497 -- PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

This bill expands the definition of "supervision" of physician assistants to allow supervising physicians to be available via telecommunication for consultation, assistance, or intervention. Supervising physicians must be present a minimum of 66% of the clinic's hours for practice supervision and collaboration when utilizing physician assistants, and physician assistants must practice within 30 miles of the supervising physician.

The Advisory Commission on Physician Assistants is authorized to create a waiver mechanism by which an individual physician and a physician assistant together may apply to the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts for alternate amounts of on-site supervision and distances from the supervising physician. After receiving a waiver, the physician assistant will be allowed to conduct unsupervised practice up to 50 miles from the supervising physician in a designated health professional shortage area.

Prior to allowing a physician assistant to practice without the physician being physically present, the physician assistant must practice for one month with continuous physician supervision. After January 1, 2008, a physician assistant applicant will be required to have a master's degree from a physician assistant program.

The bill also voids and makes it against public policy to require any physician to enter into any contract or other agreement to act as a supervising physician for any physician assistant. A physician has the right to refuse to act as a supervising physician, and no contract will limit the supervising physician's ultimate authority over any protocols or standing orders. A physician cannot supervise more than three full-time physician assistants except in a hospital setting.