

HCS HB 1869 -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

SPONSOR: Gregory

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 12 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1869.

This bill changes the laws regarding physical therapists so that physical therapists no longer need a prescription or referral from a doctor in order to evaluate and initiate treatment on a patient provided that the physical therapist has a doctorate of physical therapy degree or has five years of clinical practice as a physical therapist.

However, a physical therapist is required to refer to an approved health care provider any patient whose condition is beyond the physical therapist's scope of practice, or any patient who does not demonstrate measurable or functional improvement after 9 visits or 21 business days, whichever occurs first. The physical therapist must also consult with an approved health care provider before continuing therapy if after 9 visits or 21 business days, whichever occurs first, the patient has demonstrated measurable or functional improvement from the physical therapy and the physical therapist believes that continuation of physical therapy is necessary. Continued physical therapy must be in accordance with any direction of the health care provider. The physical therapist must notify the health care provider of continuing physical therapy every 30 days.

This bill is the same as HCS HB 410 (2019) and similar to HB 2287 (2020) and HB 2090 (2018).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the current system takes more time and money by requiring patients to see a physician before they see a physical therapist. Current Missouri law is restrictive, and this bill will allow for quicker access to treatment and frees up medical doctors to do what only they can do.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gregory; Chris Marsh P.T.; and Jennifer J. Schnieders, Missouri Physical Therapy Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill goes too far and there needs to be a middle ground. Physical therapists should have to have a doctorate, and require patients to sign a disclosure form acknowledging that they are not seeing a medical doctor.

Testifying against the bill were Jefferson City Medical Group; Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Chiropractic Physicians Association; and Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.