

HB 367 -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

SPONSOR: Gregory (96)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Downsizing State Government by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 13 to 0.

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, as long as the physical therapist has a doctorate of physical therapy degree or has five years of clinical practice as a physical therapist. Under current law, a physical therapist can examine and treat a person with a previously-diagnosed chronic illness or a person with a recurring self-limited injury without a prescription, as long as it is within one year of a diagnosis by a health care provider.

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 10 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 10 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.

The bill removes a provision that allows the Board to file a complaint against a physical therapist who provides physical therapy without a prescription.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1869 and HB 2287 (2020), and HCS HB 410 (2019).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will give direct access to physical therapy to all Missourians. Treatment cost will go down and the recovery time will be quicker with this bill implemented. The current process to get a physical therapist takes a substance amount of time and is the only treatment that requires a referral.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gregory; Jean C Knapp; Arnie Dienoff; Chris Marsh, Missouri Physical Therapy Association; and Jennifer Schnieders, Physical Therapy Association of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill will create unintended risks to patients if they are not required to see a doctor first. The bill will not even require a patient to see a doctor until months later.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (MAOPS); Signature Medical Group; Missouri State Medical Association; and the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.