

HCS HBs 115 & 99 -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

SPONSOR: Shields

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 10 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 115 and 99.

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. However, the bill does require a physical therapist 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 State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts to file a complaint against a physical therapist who provides physical therapy without a prescription.

This bill is similar to HB 1555 (2022) and HB 367 (2021).

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 this removes barriers and allows for quicker access to care which can result in less care needed. We are currently losing out on tax dollars from patients crossing state borders to see a physical therapist without a referral.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Shields; Chris Marsh, P.T., Mo Physical Therapy Association; and Jennifer Schnieders, Missouri Physical Therapy Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that physical therapists can not order lab tests and are unable to diagnose underlying issues as well as a physician can.

Testifying in person against the bill was the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say physical therapist care is important and issues with previous versions of the bill have been fixed.

Testifying in person on the bill was the Signature Medical Group.

Online testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.