



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

Audra Tidball

Sub. H.B. 131*

132nd General Assembly

(As Reported by S. Health, Human Services and Medicaid)

Reps. Gavarone and Reineke, Blessing, Lepore-Hagan, Anielski, Antonio, Arndt, Ashford, Greenspan, Hambley, Henne, Holmes, Hoops, Manning, Patton, Pelanda, Rogers, Ryan, Schaffer, Scherer, Schuring, Seitz, Slaby, Stein, Sweeney, West, Wiggam

BILL SUMMARY

- Includes in the practice of physical therapy the evaluation of a person to determine (1) a physical therapy diagnosis to treat physical impairments, functional limitations, and physical disabilities, (2) a prognosis, and (3) a plan of therapeutic intervention.
 - Specifies that "physical therapy diagnosis" does not include a medical diagnosis.
 - For purposes of licensing a physical therapist assistant without requiring passage of the national examination within one year of the application, permits the Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board to recognize an applicant's reasonably equivalent education from a foreign country.
 - Modifies technical application requirements for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

Physical therapy scope of practice

The bill modifies the activities that may be performed by a physical therapist as described in the physical therapist licensing law.¹ Currently, the practice of physical

* This analysis was prepared before the report of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee appeared in the Senate Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete

¹ R.C. 4755.40 to 4755.56.

therapy is described generally as the evaluation and treatment of a person by physical measures and the use of therapeutic exercises and rehabilitative procedures, with or without assistive devices, for the purpose of preventing, correcting, or alleviating any disability.

Purpose relative to treating disability

The bill revises the existing description of the purpose of physical therapy. Under the bill, the purpose is to prevent, correct, or alleviate physical impairments, functional limitations, and physical disabilities (rather than to prevent, correct, or alleviate any disability, as provided in current law).²

Patient evaluation and physical therapy diagnosis

The bill specifies that physical therapy includes the evaluation of a person to determine all of the following:

- (1) A physical therapy diagnosis to treat a person's physical impairments, functional limitations, and physical disabilities;
- (2) A prognosis;
- (3) A plan of therapeutic intervention.³

"Physical therapy diagnosis" is defined by the bill as a judgment made after examining the neuromusculoskeletal system or evaluating or studying its symptoms and that uses physical therapy techniques and science to establish a plan of therapeutic intervention. The bill specifies that a physical therapy diagnosis does not include a medical diagnosis.⁴ In conjunction, the bill eliminates a similar provision of existing law specifying that physical therapy does not include the medical diagnosis of a patient's disability.

Physical measures

The bill specifies that the physical measures a physical therapist may use include not only massage, as provided in current law, but also other manual therapy techniques. The other physical measures included in the practice of physical therapy under current law are heat, cold, air, light, water, electricity (except as discussed below), sound, and the performance of tests of neuromuscular function as an aid to treatment.

² R.C. 4755.40(A).

³ R.C. 4755.40(A)(1).

⁴ R.C. 4755.40(B)



Retained exclusions and limitations

The following activities are currently excluded from the practice of physical therapy and remain expressly excluded under the bill, including under the bill's revisions regarding the use of physical measures:⁵

- (1) The use of Roentgen rays (X-rays) or radium for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes;
- (2) The use of electricity for cauterization or other surgical purposes.

The bill retains a provision specifying that physical therapy includes activities involving assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, prosthetics, and orthotics, but only if the activities are performed by a person who is adequately trained.⁶ The bill removes this limitation regarding adequate training from certain other activities that current law identifies as being part of the practice of physical therapy. This does not alter the requirement to be licensed as a physical therapist to perform these activities.⁷

Physical therapist assistant reciprocity

The bill expands existing law that permits the Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board to recognize a physical therapist assistant applicant's education from another state as reasonably equivalent. The recognition may be made for purposes of allowing the Board to license the applicant without requiring the applicant to have passed the national examination within one year of applying for licensure as a physical therapist assistant.

Under the bill, the Board also may recognize education from another country as reasonably equivalent.⁸ The bill requires the Board to adopt rules identifying credentialing organizations for equivalency evaluations of foreign physical therapist assistant education.⁹

This is similar to current law for physical therapists, which permits recognition of education from other states and countries.¹⁰ Also similar to current law for physical

⁵ R.C. 4755.40(A)(2).

⁶ R.C. 4755.40(A)(1).

⁷ R.C. 4755.48 and 4755.99, not in the bill.

⁸ R.C. 4755.451(A)(4).

⁹ R.C. 4755.411(K)(1).

¹⁰ R.C. 4755.45, not in the bill.



therapists, the bill adds a provision for physical therapist assistants that permits the Board to deny an equivalency evaluation from a credentialing organization. In that case, the Board must notify the applicant in writing of the denial and the specific reason for the denial.¹¹

Applications for physical therapist or assistant licensure

With regard to applications to practice as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant, the bill eliminates the following requirements:¹²

(1) A requirement that applications be filed specifically with the *Secretary* of the Physical Therapy Section of the Board, as opposed to with the Physical Therapy Section generally;

(2) A requirement that applications be notarized.

Regarding applications to practice as a physical therapist assistant, the bill also eliminates an existing requirement that the applicant provide proof of completing an education program that is specifically two years. Instead, the bill requires proof of completing a physical therapist assistant program of education. Although the length of the program is no longer specified, the bill retains a requirement that the program be accredited.¹³

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	03-16-17
Reported, H. Health	03-21-18
Passed House (95-0)	04-11-18
Reported, S. Health, Human Services & Medicaid	---

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¹¹ R.C. 4755.451(B).

¹² R.C. 4755.42(A) and 4755.421(A).

¹³ R.C. 4755.421(A)(4).

