



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

Elizabeth Molnar

H.B. 220

130th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Rep. Hood

BILL SUMMARY

- Provides that the practice of physical therapy includes the evaluation of a person to determine (1) a diagnosis of physical impairment, functional limitations, or disability, (2) a prognosis, and (3) a plan of therapeutic intervention.
- Eliminates a provision specifying that the practice of physical therapy does not include the medical diagnosis of a patient's disability.
- Permits an adequately trained physical therapist to order certain tests, but provides that the tests are to be performed and interpreted by other licensed health care professionals.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Physical therapy scope of practice

The bill modifies the activities that may be performed by a physical therapist as described in physical therapist licensing law.¹ Currently, the practice of physical therapy is described 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. Physical measures include massage, heat, cold, air, light, water, electricity, sound, and the performance of tests of neuromuscular function as an aid to such treatment.

If performed by a person who is adequately trained, the practice of physical therapy currently includes all of the following: (1) the design, fabrication, revision, education, and instruction in the use of various assistive devices including braces, splints, ambulatory or locomotion devices, wheelchairs, prosthetics, and orthotics,

¹ R.C. 4755.40 to 4755.56.

(2) the administration of topical drugs that have been prescribed by a licensed health professional authorized to prescribe drugs, (3) the establishment and modification of physical therapy programs, treatment planning, patient education and instruction, and consultative services, and (4) physiotherapy.

Current law permits a physical therapist to evaluate and treat a patient without the prescription of, or the referral of the patient by, a physician or another specified health professional. This is often referred to as the "direct access" provision. In general, a physical therapist practicing under the direct access provision must (1) hold a master's degree or doctorate from an accredited professional physical therapy program, (2) consult with or refer a patient to a physician or another specified health professional if the patient has not made substantial progress within 30 days, and (3) refer a patient to another health professional if the patient has symptoms or conditions that require treatment or services beyond the scope of practice of physical therapy.²

Diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutic intervention

Current law specifies that the practice of physical therapy does not include certain activities, including the medical diagnosis of a patient's disability. The bill removes the restriction regarding the medical diagnosis of a patient's disability.³

The bill provides that, for the purpose of preventing, correcting, or alleviating physical impairments, functional limitations, or any disability, the practice of physical therapy includes the evaluation of a person to determine the following:

- (1) A diagnosis of physical impairment, functional limitations, or disability;
- (2) A prognosis;
- (3) A plan of therapeutic intervention.⁴

Ordering tests

The bill allows a physical therapist, if adequately trained, to order appropriate tests, including diagnostic imaging and studies. The bill, however, specifies that the tests are to be performed and interpreted by other licensed health care professionals.⁵

² R.C. 4755.48 and 4755.481 (not in the bill).

³ R.C. 4755.40(A)(3).

⁴ R.C. 4755.40(A)(1)(a).

⁵ R.C. 4755.40(A)(2)(e).



HISTORY

ACTION

DATE

Introduced

06-25-13

H0220-I-130.docx/emr

