

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT
(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Health Regulation Committee

BILL: SB 1700

INTRODUCER: Senator Aronberg

SUBJECT: Physician Assistants/Paramedic Certifications

DATE: March 10, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Munroe	Wilson	HR	Favorable
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The bill adds physician assistants to the list of health care practitioners who may be certified as a paramedic. A physician assistant may be certified if he or she is certified in Florida as an emergency medical technician (EMT), has passed the required EMT curriculum, has successfully completed an advanced cardiac life support course, has passed the examination for certification as a paramedic, and has met other certification requirements specified by rule of the Department of Health. Any physician assistant so certified must be recertified under the regulations for paramedic certification.

This bill amends s. 401.27, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics

Part III, ch. 401, F.S., provides for the regulation of EMTs and paramedics by the Department of Health. Section 401.23, F.S., provides definitions. "Advanced life support" is defined to mean treatment of life-threatening medical emergencies through the use of specified techniques by a qualified person, pursuant to Department of Health rules. "Basic life support" is defined to mean treatment of medical emergencies by a qualified person through the use of specified techniques and other techniques described in the Emergency Medical Technician Basic Training Course Curriculum of the United States Department of Transportation. "Basic life support" also includes other techniques that have been approved and are performed under conditions specified by rules of the Department of Health.

Section 401.27(2), F.S., requires the Department of Health to adopt by rule, educational and training criteria and examinations for certification and recertification of EMTs and paramedics. An applicant for certification or recertification as an EMT or paramedic must: (1) have completed an appropriate training course that is equivalent to the most recent EMT basic or paramedic training course of the United States Department of Transportation, as approved by the Department of Health; (2) certify under oath that he or she is not addicted to alcohol or any controlled substance, and that he or she is free from any physical or mental defect or disease that might impair the applicant's ability to perform his or her duties; and (3) within 1 year after course completion have passed an examination developed by or required by the department and hold current American Heart Association or American Red Cross cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification for the appropriate level or its equivalent.¹

Under s. 401.27, F.S., a physician, dentist, or registered nurse may be certified as a paramedic if the physician, dentist, or registered nurse is certified as an EMT, has passed the required EMT curriculum, has successfully completed an advanced cardiac life support course, has passed the examination for certification as a paramedic and has met other certification requirements specified by rule of the Department of Health. Any physician, dentist, or registered nurse so certified must be recertified under the regulations for paramedic certification.

Physician Assistants

Physician assistants licensed under ch. 458 or ch. 459, F.S.,² are authorized to provide health care services under the supervision of a medical physician or osteopathic physician. A supervising physician is authorized to delegate to a physician assistant that he or she supervises the authority to perform medical acts of diagnosis, treatment, and prescription. Each physician or group of physicians supervising a licensed physician assistant must be qualified in the medical areas in which the physician assistant is to perform and must be individually or collectively responsible and liable for the performance and the acts and omissions of the physician assistant. A physician may not supervise more than four currently licensed physician assistants at any one time.

For purposes of the regulation of physician assistants, "supervision" is defined in ss. 458.347 and 459.022, F.S., to mean responsible supervision and control. Except for cases of emergency, supervision requires the easy availability or physical presence of the licensed physician for consultation and direction of the actions of the physician assistant. "Easy availability" is defined to include the ability to communicate by way of telecommunication. The Board of Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Medicine must establish rules as to what constitutes responsible supervision of the physician assistant. The Board of Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Medicine have adopted identical administrative rules that define "direct supervision" to mean the presence of the supervising physician on the premises so that the supervising physician is immediately available to the physician assistant when needed.³ "Indirect supervision" is defined under the rules to mean the easy availability of the supervising physician to the physician

¹ Section 401.27(4), F.S.

² See sections 458.347 and 459.022, F.S.

³ See Rules 64B8-30.001(3) and 64B15-6.001(4), Florida Administrative Code.

assistant, which includes the ability to communicate by telecommunications and the supervising physician must be within reasonable physical proximity.⁴

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill adds physician assistants to the list of health care practitioners who may be certified as a paramedic. A physician assistant may be certified if he or she is certified in Florida as an EMT, has passed the required EMT curriculum, has successfully completed an advanced cardiac life support course, has passed the examination for certification as a paramedic, and has met other certification requirements specified by rule of the Department of Health. Any physician assistant so certified must be recertified under the regulations for paramedic certification.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2007.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Article VII, Section 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Article I, Section 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Article III, Subsection 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health will incur costs to implement the bill. Such costs should be minimal.

⁴ See Rules 64B8-30.001(5) and 64B15-6.001(5), F.A.C.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
