
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTHCARE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the practice of
2 respiratory care in Hawaii affects the public's health, safety,
3 and welfare. Accordingly, the practice of respiratory care
4 should be subject to regulation and control to protect the
5 public from the unqualified practice of respiratory care and
6 from unprofessional conduct by persons licensed to practice
7 respiratory care. According to the American Association for
8 Respiratory Care, Hawaii is one of only two United States
9 jurisdictions that does not regulate the practice of respiratory
10 care.

11 The legislature further finds that the practice of
12 respiratory care is a dynamic and changing science that
13 continues to evolve with more sophisticated techniques and
14 clinical modalities in patient care.

15 The purpose of this Act is to establish licensure
16 requirements for the practice of respiratory care.



1 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
2 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
3 as follows:

4 **"CHAPTER**

5 **RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS**

6 **§ -1 Definitions.** For the purposes of this chapter:

7 "Department" means the department of commerce and consumer
8 affairs.

9 "Director" means the director of commerce and consumer
10 affairs.

11 "Licensed respiratory therapist" means a person:

- 12 (1) Who engages in the practice of respiratory care and
13 uses the title of licensed respiratory therapist;
14 (2) Who has been issued a license under this chapter; and
15 (3) Whose license is in effect and not revoked, suspended,
16 or encumbered.

17 "Practice of respiratory care" means providing assessment,
18 therapy, management, rehabilitation, support services for
19 diagnostic evaluation, education, and care for patients with
20 deficiencies and abnormalities that affect the pulmonary system,
21 including:



- 1 (1) Respiratory care services, including the
- 2 administration of pharmacological, diagnostic, and
- 3 therapeutic care related to respiratory care
- 4 procedures necessary for treatment, disease
- 5 prevention, rehabilitative, or diagnostic regimens
- 6 prescribed by a physician;
- 7 (2) Observation and monitoring of signs, symptoms,
- 8 reactions, and physical responses to respiratory care
- 9 treatment and diagnostic testing;
- 10 (3) Diagnostic or therapeutic use of:
- 11 (A) Medical gases, excluding general anesthesia;
- 12 (B) Aerosols, humidification, environmental control
- 13 systems, or invasive and non-invasive modalities;
- 14 (C) Pharmacological care related to respiratory care
- 15 procedures;
- 16 (D) Mechanical or physiological ventilatory support,
- 17 including maintenance of natural airways and
- 18 insertion and maintenance of artificial airways;
- 19 (E) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and
- 20 (F) Respiratory protocol and evaluation or diagnostic
- 21 and testing techniques required for
- 22 implementation of respiratory care protocols; and

1 (4) The transcription and implementation of the written,
2 verbal, and telecommunicated orders of a physician
3 pertaining to the practice of respiratory care.

4 "Qualified medical direction" means ready access by a
5 respiratory therapist to a licensed physician who has specialty
6 training or experience in the management of acute and chronic
7 respiratory disorders and who is responsible for the quality,
8 safety, and appropriateness of the respiratory services provided
9 by the respiratory therapist.

10 **§ -2 Respiratory therapist program.** There is
11 established a respiratory therapist program within the
12 department to be administered by the director.

13 **§ -3 License required.** (a) Except as specifically
14 provided in this chapter, no person shall engage in the practice
15 of respiratory care or use the title "licensed respiratory
16 therapist" or "respiratory therapist" without a valid license
17 issued pursuant to this chapter.

18 (b) Any person who violates this section shall be subject
19 to a fine of not more than \$1,000 for each separate offense.
20 Each day of each violation shall constitute a separate offense.
21 The director may initiate a civil action to collect the fine



1 imposed under this section in accordance with rules adopted by
2 the director.

3 **§ -4 Physician supervision required.** No person shall
4 practice respiratory care under this chapter except under the
5 direct order and qualified medical direction of a physician or
6 osteopathic physician licensed pursuant to chapter 453.

7 **§ -5 Powers and duties of the director.** In addition to
8 any other powers and duties authorized by law, the director
9 shall have the powers and duties to:

- 10 (1) Grant, deny, renew, refuse to renew, restore,
11 terminate, reinstate, condition, restrict, suspend, or
12 revoke a license issued pursuant to this chapter;
- 13 (2) Grant permission to a person to practice respiratory
14 care and to use the title of "licensed respiratory
15 therapist" or a description indicating that the person
16 is a licensed respiratory therapist in this State;
- 17 (3) Adopt, amend, or repeal rules pursuant to chapter 91
18 as the director finds necessary to carry out this
19 chapter;
- 20 (4) Administer, coordinate, and enforce this chapter;
- 21 (5) Prepare and administer examinations pursuant to the
22 requirements of this chapter;



- 1 (6) Establish the criteria for successful passage of an
2 examination administered pursuant to this chapter;
- 3 (7) Discipline a licensed respiratory therapist on grounds
4 specified by this chapter or chapter 436B or for any
5 violation of rules adopted by the director pursuant to
6 this chapter;
- 7 (8) Refuse to license a person for failure to meet the
8 licensing requirements in this chapter or for any
9 reason specified by this chapter as grounds to
10 discipline a respiratory therapist; and
- 11 (9) Appoint an advisory committee composed of practicing
12 respiratory therapists to assist with the
13 implementation of this chapter.

14 **§ -6 Fees; disposition.** (a) Upon issuance of a new
15 license and at each license renewal period, each respiratory
16 therapist shall pay a fee of \$304 that shall be deposited into
17 the compliance resolution fund established pursuant to section
18 26-9(o).

19 (b) Application fees paid pursuant to this chapter shall
20 not be refundable. Pursuant to section 26-9(1), the director
21 shall establish examination, reexamination, license, renewal,



1 restoration, penalty, and other fees relating to the
2 administration of this chapter by rule.

3 (c) Fees assessed pursuant to this chapter shall be used
4 to defray costs incurred by the department in implementing this
5 chapter.

6 **§ -7 Exemptions.** This chapter is not intended to
7 restrict the practice of other licensed or credentialed
8 healthcare practitioners practicing within their own recognized
9 scopes of practice and shall not apply to:

10 (1) A person working within the scope of practice or
11 duties of another licensed profession that overlaps
12 with the practice of respiratory care; provided that
13 the person does not purport to be a respiratory
14 therapist;

15 (2) A person working as, or training to become, a sleep
16 technologist or person who is enrolled in a Commission
17 on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs,
18 Accredited Sleep Technologist Education Program, or a
19 program approved by the American Association of Sleep
20 Technologists to become a sleep technologist; provided
21 that, as used in this paragraph, a "sleep
22 technologist" is defined as a person trained in sleep



1 technology and relevant aspects of sleep medicine,
2 evaluation, and follow-up care of patients with sleep
3 disorders;

4 (3) A person enrolled as a student in an accredited
5 respiratory therapy program where the performance of
6 duties that are regulated by this chapter is an
7 integral part of the student's program of study;

8 (4) A person employed by a durable medical equipment
9 provider who engages in the delivery, assembly, setup,
10 testing, and demonstration of oxygen and aerosol
11 equipment upon the order of a physician; provided that
12 no person providing those services shall be authorized
13 to assess patients, develop care plans, instruct
14 patients in taking treatment, or discuss the hazards,
15 administration, or side effects of medication with
16 patients;

17 (5) A person rendering services in the case of an
18 emergency or in the domestic administration of family
19 remedies; or

20 (6) A person employed by a federal, state, or county
21 government agency in a respiratory therapist position,



1 but only in the course of carrying out the duties and
2 responsibilities of government employment.

3 **§ -8 Application for license as a respiratory therapist.**

4 The department shall issue a license under this chapter to an
5 applicant if the applicant provides satisfactory evidence to the
6 department that the applicant meets the requirements for
7 licensure contained in this chapter and rules adopted by the
8 director and if the applicant:

9 (1) Has successfully completed a respiratory therapy
10 training program at an accredited educational
11 institution approved by the Committee on Accreditation
12 for Respiratory Care or its predecessor or successor
13 agencies;

14 (2) Has passed the Certified Respiratory Therapist
15 Examination of the National Board for Respiratory
16 Care, or its successor, within ninety days of
17 submitting an application; and

18 (3) Has paid all fees for licensure established by the
19 director.

20 **§ -9 Licensure by endorsement.** The director may issue a
21 license by endorsement to an applicant who holds a current and
22 unencumbered license as a respiratory therapist in another



1 state; provided that the requirements for a license in that
2 state are deemed by the director to be equivalent to or higher
3 than the current requirements for licensure in this State.

4 **§ -10 Renewal of license.** Licenses issued pursuant to
5 this chapter shall be valid for three years and shall be renewed
6 upon the payment of a renewal fee within sixty days before the
7 expiration of the license. Failure to renew a license shall
8 result in forfeiture of that license. Licenses that have been
9 forfeited may be restored within one year of the forfeiture date
10 upon payment of renewal and restoration fees. Failure to
11 restore a forfeited license within one year shall result in the
12 automatic termination of the license. A person whose license
13 has been terminated pursuant to this section shall be required
14 to reapply for a new license as a new applicant.

15 **§ -11 Grounds for refusal to renew, reinstate, or**
16 **restore a license and for revocation, suspension, denial, or**
17 **condition of a license.** (a) In addition to any other acts or
18 conditions provided by law, the director may refuse to renew,
19 reinstate, or restore and may deny, revoke, suspend, or
20 condition in any manner any license for any one or more of the
21 following acts or conditions on the part of a licensee or
22 license applicant:



- 1 (1) Failure to meet or to maintain the conditions and
2 requirements necessary to qualify for the granting of
3 a license;
- 4 (2) Engaging in false, fraudulent, or deceptive
5 advertising, or making untruthful or improbable
6 statements in advertising;
- 7 (3) Engaging in the practice of respiratory care while
8 impaired by alcohol, drugs, physical disability, or
9 mental instability;
- 10 (4) Procuring a license to practice respiratory care
11 through fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit;
- 12 (5) Aiding and abetting an unlicensed person to directly
13 or indirectly perform activities requiring a license
14 to practice respiratory care;
- 15 (6) Engaging in professional misconduct, incompetence,
16 gross negligence, or manifest incapacity in the
17 practice of respiratory care;
- 18 (7) Engaging in conduct or a practice contrary to
19 recognized standards of ethics for the practice of
20 respiratory care;
- 21 (8) Violating any condition or limitation imposed on a
22 license to practice respiratory care by the director;



- 1 (9) Engaging in the practice of respiratory care in a
2 manner that causes injury to one or more members of
3 the public;
- 4 (10) Failing to comply with, observe, or adhere to any law
5 in a manner that causes the director to determine that
6 the applicant or holder is unfit to hold a license;
- 7 (11) Having a license revoked or suspended or other
8 disciplinary action by any state or federal agency for
9 any reason that is provided by the applicable
10 licensing laws or by this section;
- 11 (12) Having been convicted or pleaded nolo contendere to a
12 crime directly related to the qualifications,
13 functions, or duties of the practice of respiratory
14 care;
- 15 (13) Failing to report in writing to the director any
16 disciplinary decision issued against the licensee or
17 applicant in another jurisdiction within thirty days
18 of the disciplinary decision;
- 19 (14) Employing, whether gratuitously or for pay, any person
20 not licensed pursuant to this chapter to perform the
21 functions or duties of the practice of respiratory
22 care; or



1 (15) Violating this chapter, chapter 436B, or any rule or
2 order of the director.

3 (b) Any licensee or applicant who violates this section
4 may also be fined not more than \$1,000 per violation, as
5 established by the director by rule."

6 SECTION 3. Section 26H-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended to read as follows:

8 **"§26H-4 Repeal dates for newly enacted professional and**
9 **vocational regulatory programs.** (a) Any professional or
10 vocational regulatory program enacted after January 1, 1994, and
11 listed in this section shall be repealed [~~on December 31, 2008.~~]
12 as specified in this section. The auditor shall perform an
13 evaluation of the program, pursuant to section 26H-5, prior to
14 its repeal date.

15 (b) Chapter (respiratory therapists) shall be repealed
16 on June 30, 2016."

17 SECTION 4. The department of commerce and consumer affairs
18 may employ necessary personnel without regard to chapter 76,
19 Hawaii Revised Statutes, to assist with the implementation and
20 continuing functions of this chapter.

21 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the compliance
22 resolution fund established pursuant to section 26-9(o), Hawaii



1 Revised Statutes, the sum of \$137,000 or so much thereof as may
2 be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 to implement the
3 respiratory therapists licensure program.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
5 commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
7 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2011;
9 provided that section -5 of section 2 of this Act shall take
10 effect upon approval; and provided further that section 5 of
11 this Act shall take effect on July 1, 2010.

12



Report Title:

Respiratory Therapists; Licensure; Appropriation

Description:

Creates licensing and regulatory standards for respiratory therapists. (CD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

