
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii is facing a
2 critical physician shortage. The University of Hawaii's most
3 recent physician workforce assessment found that Oahu needs
4 three hundred eighty-one physicians, the island of Hawaii is
5 short one hundred ninety-six physicians, Maui county has a
6 deficit of one hundred thirty-nine physicians, and Kauai needs
7 fifty-three physicians. Physician assistants, like advanced
8 practice registered nurses, can help fill this need.

9 The legislature further finds that physician assistants
10 undergo rigorous medical training. Physician assistants must
11 take a test in general medicine in order to be licensed and
12 certified, and they must graduate from an accredited physician
13 assistant program and pass a certification exam. Like
14 physicians and advanced practice registered nurses, physician
15 assistants must also complete extensive continuing medical
16 education throughout their careers. Studies have shown that
17 when physician assistants practice to the full extent of their



1 abilities and training, hospital readmission rates and lengths
2 of stay decrease and infection rates go down. A 2014 Harris
3 Poll found extremely high satisfaction rates among Americans who
4 interact with physician assistants. The survey found that
5 ninety-three per cent of respondents regard physician assistants
6 as trusted healthcare providers, ninety-two per cent of
7 respondents said that having a physician assistant makes it
8 easier to get a medical appointment, and ninety-one per cent of
9 respondents believe that physician assistants improve the
10 quality of healthcare.

11 The legislature additionally finds that current
12 requirements in the Hawaii medical board's administrative rules
13 for the license renewal of physician assistants are overly
14 burdensome and discourage individuals from entering the
15 profession. Hawaii is one of a minority of states that mandate
16 continuing education requirements and continuing certification
17 by the National Commission on Certification of Physician
18 Assistants for the renewal of a physician assistant license.
19 The legislature notes that a majority of states allow physician
20 assistants to renew their licenses by meeting continuing
21 education requirements only.



1 The legislature concludes that Hawaii's licensing standard
2 for physician assistants should be aligned with the majority of
3 states, which will encourage the growth of the physician
4 assistant profession.

5 The purpose of this Act is to specify the continuing
6 education requirements for renewal of a physician assistant
7 certification and authorize the Hawaii medical board to conduct
8 random audits for compliance.

9 SECTION 2. Section 453-5.3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended to read as follows:

11 "**§453-5.3 Physician assistant; licensure required.** (a)
12 The Hawaii medical board shall require each person practicing
13 medicine under the supervision of a physician or osteopathic
14 physician, other than a person licensed under section 453-3, to
15 be licensed as a physician assistant. A person who is trained
16 to do only a very limited number of diagnostic or therapeutic
17 procedures under the direction of a physician or osteopathic
18 physician shall not be deemed a practitioner of medicine or
19 osteopathy and therefore does not require licensure under this
20 section.



1 (b) The board shall establish medical educational and
2 training standards with which a person applying for licensure as
3 a physician assistant shall comply. The standards shall be at
4 least equal to recognized national education and training
5 standards for physician assistants.

6 (c) Upon satisfactory proof of compliance with the
7 required medical educational and training standards, the board
8 may grant state licensure to a person who has been granted
9 certification based upon passage of a national certifying
10 examination and who holds a current certificate from the
11 national certifying entity approved by the board.

12 (d) The board shall approve temporary licensure of an
13 applicant under this section. The applicant shall have
14 graduated from a board approved training program within twelve
15 months of the date of application and never taken a national
16 certifying examination approved by the board but otherwise meets
17 the requirements of this section. The applicant shall file a
18 complete application with the board and pay all required fees.
19 If the applicant fails to apply for, or to take, the first
20 examination scheduled by the board following the issuance of the
21 temporary license, fails to pass the examination, or fails to



1 receive licensure, all privileges under this section shall
2 automatically cease upon written notification sent to the
3 applicant by the board. A temporary license shall be issued
4 only once to each person.

5 (e) Prior to practicing under temporary licensure, holders
6 of temporary licenses shall notify the board in writing of any
7 and all supervising physicians or osteopathic physicians under
8 whom they will be performing services.

9 (f) The board shall establish the degree of supervision
10 required by the supervising physician or osteopathic physician
11 when a physician assistant performs a service within the
12 practice of medicine. A physician or osteopathic physician who
13 does not supervise a physician assistant's services at the
14 degree required by the board shall be deemed to have engaged in
15 professional misconduct.

16 (g) Any license of a physician assistant may be denied,
17 not renewed, revoked, limited, or suspended under section 453-8.

18 (h) The board shall establish the application procedure,
19 medical educational and training standards, examination
20 requirement, if any, and degrees of supervision by rule.



1 (i) Every person holding a license under this section
2 shall apply for renewal with the board no later than January 31
3 of each even-numbered year and pay a renewal fee. Failure to
4 apply for renewal shall constitute a forfeiture of the license
5 that may only be restored upon written application for
6 restoration and payment to the board of a restoration fee.

7 (j) Beginning with the renewal for the licensing biennium
8 commencing February 1, 2020, and every biennial renewal
9 thereafter, a physician assistant shall be in compliance with
10 continuing education requirements by obtaining forty credit
11 hours in:

12 (1) A category 1 continuing medical education program
13 accredited by the American Medical Association;

14 (2) A category 1A continuing medical education program
15 accredited by the American Osteopathic Association;

16 (3) A category 1 continuing medical education program
17 accredited by the American Academy of Physician
18 Assistants; or

19 (4) Other category 1 or 1A continuing medical education
20 approved by the board through rules.



1 (k) To determine compliance with the continuing education
2 requirements under subsection (j), the board may conduct random
3 audits of physician assistants' continuing education
4 documentation. A physician assistant selected for audit shall
5 be notified by the board. Within sixty days of notification,
6 the physician assistant shall provide the board documentation to
7 verify compliance with the continuing medical education
8 requirements.

9 [~~(j)~~] (1) A license that has been forfeited for one
10 renewal term shall be automatically terminated and cannot be
11 restored. A new application for licensure shall be required."

12 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
13 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
14 begun before its effective date.

15 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
16 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

17 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Physician Assistants; Continuing Medical Education;
Requirements; Hawaii Medical Board; Random Audits

Description:

Establishes biennial requirements of forty credit hours in specified continuing medical education programs for renewal of physician assistant license, beginning with the renewal for the licensing biennium on 2/1/2020, and every biennial renewal thereafter. Authorizes the Hawaii Medical Board to conduct random document audits to enforce compliance. (SD1)

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