

Legislative Analysis



DIRECT ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4603

Sponsor: Rep. Margaret O'Brien

Committee: Health Policy

Complete to 6-15-11

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4603 AS INTRODUCED 5-3-11

The bill would allow a physical therapist to treat a patient without the patient first obtaining a prescription from his or her physician, dentist, or podiatrist.

Currently, the Michigan Public Health Code requires a patient to obtain a prescription for physical therapy services before a physical therapist may provide treatment. The prescription must be issued by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), dentist, or podiatrist. House Bill 4603 would amend the Public Health Code to delete that requirement. Thus, a patient could seek treatment from a licensed physical therapist directly.

The bill would also make the following changes:

- Revise the examples of physical measure within the definition of the term "practice of physical therapy" to specify the "prescribing of medical treatment" instead of just "prescribing of treatment."
- Add "Doctor of Physiotherapy" and "Doctor of Physical Therapy" to the list of titles of which the use is restricted to persons authorized under Part 178 (Physical Therapists).
- Revise references to the "health care professional who issued the prescription for treatment" to specify instead "an appropriate health care professional."
- Repeal Section 17822 of the code. Section 17822 specifies that Part 178 does not prohibit a hospital, as a condition of employment or the granting of staff privileges, from requiring a physical therapist to practice in the hospital only upon the prescription of an individual holding a license issued under Part 166 (dentists), 170 M.D.s), 175 (D.O.s), or 180 (podiatrists) or the equivalent license issued by another state.

MCL 333.17801 et al

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4603 would have no significant fiscal impact on the state or local units of government. As an employer providing health insurance to employees, the state health

plan currently provides that patients seeking physical therapy services must receive a referral from their attending physician. While this requirement mirrors current law, the policy could remain in place even after enactment of House Bill 4603. As a provider of medical services (through Medicaid), current state policy requires a physician's referral and prior authorization for physical therapy services.

Legislative Analyst: Susan Stutzky
Fiscal Analyst: Mark Wolf

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.