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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/08/09
 LAST UPDATED 2/19/09 HB 536/aHHGAC

SPONSOR Espinoza

SHORT TITLE Anesthesiologist Assistant Definitions SB _____

ANALYST Moser

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	Unknown		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Health Policy Commission (HPC)
 Department of Health (DOH)
 New Mexico Medical Board
 Office of the Attorney General (AOG)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HHGAC amendment

House Health and Government Affairs Committee Amendment to House Bill 536 removes proposed changes to the development and implementation of anesthesia care plans.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 536 amends the definitions in the Anesthesiologist Assistants Act at Section 61-6-10.2 to remove the employment restriction in that section, requiring that a physician anesthesiologist and an anesthesiologist assistant be an employee of the department of anesthesiology of a medical school in New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified at this time.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

House Bill 536 removes the requirement that Anesthesiologist Assistants may only work at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, and therefore, allows other hospitals in New Mexico to employ and supervise Anesthesiologist Assistants under the same rules and regulations.

The medical board and the DOH indicate that passage of HB536 would allow other hospitals in New Mexico to employ and supervise Anesthesiologist Assistants under the same rules and regulations, allowing statewide access to these well-trained and highly skilled allied health professionals.

According to the American Medical Association, an anesthesiologist assistant is a specialty physician assistant under the direction of a licensed anesthesiologist. The AA assists the anesthesiologist in developing and implementing the anesthesia care plan. The plan may include:

- Collecting preoperative data, such as taking an appropriate health history,
- Performing various preoperative tasks, such as the insertion of intravenous and arterial catheters and special catheters for central venous pressure monitoring,
- Performing airway management and drug administration for induction and maintenance of anesthesia,
- Assisting in the administering and monitoring of regional and peripheral nerve blockade,
- Administering supportive therapy, for example, with intravenous fluids and cardiovascular drugs,
- Adjusting anesthetic levels on a minute-to-minute basis,
- Performing intra-operative monitoring,
- Providing recovery room care, and
- Functioning in the intensive care unit.

An Anesthesiologist Assistant is a master degree level program and can require between 24 and 28 months of specialized education. There are six schools in the nation that offer an AA degree: two in Florida and Georgia, one in Kansas, and in Ohio.

The DOH states that “New Mexico is facing a shortage of medical professional. Allowing an AA to perform independent duties, not requiring them to be an employee of the department of anesthesiology, would increase their ability to utilize their services in developing the anesthesia care plan for patients.”

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The medical board argues that access to expanded anesthesia services in areas outside of the Albuquerque area would continue to be restricted if HB536 is not passed. Under the current regulations, Anesthesiologist Assistants may only be employed and practice at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center where personnel shortages are less of a problem.

GM/svb:mt

