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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/31/2007
 LAST UPDATED 3/16/2007 HB _____

SPONSOR SPAC

SHORT TITLE Physician Licensure Requirements SB CS/20/aHBIC

ANALYST Aguilar/Moser

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
 Regulations and Licensing Department (RLD)
 NM Medical Board

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HBIC Amendment

The House Business and Industry Amendment to Senate Public Affairs Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 20 amends the Physician Assistant Act and the Osteopathic Physicians' Assistant Act by removing language that prohibits any physician from supervising more than two physician assistants except under specific circumstances and with board authorization. It adds language that enforces the essential requirement that all physician assistants must have a supervising physician.

Synopsis of Original Bill

The Senate Public Affairs Committee (SPAC) Substitute for Senate Bill 20 proposes to amend the Osteopathic Physicians' Assistant Act by removing language that prohibits an osteopathic physician from supervising more than two osteopathic physician assistants and adds language that enforces the essential requirement that all physician assistants must have a supervising physician as authorized by the board.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The medical board indicates that the change proposed by SB20 would update the Physician Assistant Act to better reflect the changing structure of health care organizations and facilities, and would facilitate increased access to physician assistants. Today's physicians and physician assistants work more and more in complex organizations, rather than in small private practices, and the Medical Board is well aware that this change is pushing the supervisory relationship to be more fluid and responsive to change. Removing the statutory limitation of two physician assistants per physician will allow organizations and providers to respond to change more quickly and efficiently.

In addition, the board indicates that the proposed change will increase access to basic health care by expanding the physician assistant workforce, and may possibly reduce some of the costs of that care. These benefits should be seen within the larger health care organizations, but also among the segment of physicians in private practice, who would be able to hire additional physician assistants for their practices without also having to hire additional physicians.

SB20 adds language that reinforces the essential requirement that a physician assistant must have a primary supervising physician, and mandates that supervisory relationships be approved by the Board. Physician assistants often have several secondary supervising physicians, but by statute and Medical Board rule the primary supervising physician is the individual ultimately responsible for the performance of the physician assistant. The medical board will need to create rules and procedures to ensure that physicians who apply to supervise more than two physician assistants can do so effectively and safely, whether they do so within a large organization or whether they are in a small or rural medical practice.

The Regulations and Licensing Department indicates that SPAC substitute for Senate Bill 20 authorizes the Osteopathic Physicians' Board to consider the expanding needs of large health care facilities with multiple osteopathic physicians who are capable of supervising more than two osteopathic physician assistants and still ensure high quality patient care. Health care has changed from small independent practice to larger facility care and this change is needed to create a more flexible supervisory relationship in order to increase training opportunity and patient access to skilled providers. This bill could increase the number of osteopathic physician assistants available in a healthcare facility which increase the number of patients treated and reduces the patients waiting time.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The osteopathic board would need to create rules and procedures to ensure that osteopathic physicians who apply to supervise more than two osteopathic physician assistants can ensure quality healthcare and uncompromised patient safety.

GM/csd:nt