

Senate Bill 144 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Sylvia Santana
Committee: Health Policy

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 178 (Physical Therapy) of the Public Health Code to do the following:

- Modify the scope of the practice of physical therapy.
- Specify that the practice of physical therapy would not include the practices of specific medicine governed by the Code or diagnosis of a health condition if the diagnosis fell outside the scope of practice of physical therapy.
- Delete language limiting the length of time and purposes that a physical therapist may practice on a patient who does not have a prescription from another medical professional.
- Require a physical therapist to refer a patient to a healthcare professional if the patient did not show reasonable response to treatment within 60 days of initiating care or if other health complications occurred during treatment.
- Require a physical therapist to inform a healthcare professional of the plan for care if the patient initially identified a primary health care professional.
- Specify that a third-party payer could require a member or enrollee to fulfill benefits requirements for physical therapy services.
- Require a physical therapist who treated a patient without a referral to inform the patient of the potential financial liability for receiving physical therapy services without a referral.

MCL 333.17801 et al.

BRIEF RATIONALE

Removing the requirement for physical therapy patients to receive a referral to access care would improve patient outcomes in Michigan. According to testimony, Michigan's current restrictions on direct access to physical therapy are among the most restrictive in the country. Reportedly, there is no evidence that requiring referrals helps increase patient safety. The bill should be passed to allow Michigan residents to access care directly from a physical therapist.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

(This section does not provide a comprehensive account of previous legislative efforts on this subject matter.)

Senate Bill 144 is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 668 of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, which passed the Senate and was reported by the House Committee on Health Policy.

Legislative Analyst: Alex Krabill

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Date Completed: 3-20-25

Fiscal Analyst: Nathan Leaman

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Bill Analysis @ www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.