

Can Kansas PTs Perform "Manual Therapy"?

KANSAS CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION FIGHTS PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Editorial Staff

A new bill introduced in the Kansas legislature is generating controversy in the state's chiropractic circles. The bill, which has already passed the state Senate, includes language that could allow physical therapists to perform manipulations on patients.

Senate Bill 225, introduced in February, would expand the practice of physical therapy to include a wide range of modalities. Of importance to the chiropractic profession is an amendment that would revise Kansas law and add "manual therapy" to physical therapists' scope of practice, without providing a clear definition of what manual therapy is (or is not). The Kansas Physical Therapy Association has argued the term can encompass a variety of forms of care, including mobilization and manipulation.

However, manual therapy is already included in the scope of practice for the chiropractic profession. Kansas statute 65-2871 states that persons who "examine, analyze and diagnose the human living body, and its diseases by the use of any physical, thermal or manual method" or who "adjust any misplaced tissue of any kind or nature, manipulate or treat the human body by manual, mechanical, electrical or natural methods" are engaged in the practice of chiropractic.

Complicating matters further is the fact that existing state laws prohibit a licensee from invading the field of practice of any branch of the healing arts in which the licensee is not licensed to practice.

The Kansas Chiropractic Association opposes SB 225 and has requested that "manual therapy" be excised from the bill language. In testimony before the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, KCA member Darrell Fore, DC, expressed concern over the proposed law, and explained why the language should be removed:

"Apparently all forms of manual therapy - from passive mobilization to thrust manipulation - are included under the general term manual therapy. The current definition for the treatment called physical therapy does not include this term. The reason seems obvious - it is included in the exclusive scope of practice for chiropractors.

"We understand why the PTs want to provide chiropractic treatments because of their proven healing abilities. However, the application of thrust manipulation requires considerable training and skill. This procedure is very beneficial, but can be dangerous [if performed] in an unskilled, uneducated manner - as with all the healing arts."

Unfortunately, the committee disregarded Dr. Fore's testimony. It voted unanimously in favor of the legislation and sent it to the Senate for consideration. On Feb. 28, the Senate approved the bill 27-12. It was introduced in the House on March 4 and, as we go to press, is currently under review.

The KCA has now focused its attention on making sure SB 225 does not pass the House. Its

legislative committee has outlined the reasons why SB 225 should be defeated:

"Registered physical therapists are not qualified by education or training to treat with manipulation any more than they are qualified or trained to treat by surgery or prescription medication;

"Registered physical therapists are not now allowed, nor have they ever been authorized, by the Board of Healing Arts to treat with manipulation, and any claim to currently treat, or have treated, by manipulation is declaration of an illegal act of practicing the healing arts without a license;

"Treatment by manipulation is the practice of the healing arts and, as such, it is authorized to be performed only by licensed doctors of osteopathy (KSA 65-2871) and licensed doctors of chiropractic (KSA 65-2871)."

All Kansas doctors of chiropractic are being urged to contact their legislators and ask them to vote no on Senate Bill 225. In addition, the KCA plans to provide testimony to the House Health and Human Services Committee to ensure chiropractic's message is heard.

For more information, please contact the KCA offices at (785) 233-0697.

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