

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Health Policy

BILL: CS/SB 360

INTRODUCER: Health Policy Committee and Senator Garcia

SUBJECT: Surgical Assistants and Surgical Technologists

DATE: April 2, 2013

REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| 1. | Davlantes | Stovall | HP | Fav/CS |
| 2. | | | BI | |
| 3. | | | AHP | |
| 4. | | | AP | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

- A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... Statement of Substantial Changes
- B. AMENDMENTS..... Technical amendments were recommended
- Amendments were recommended
- Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

CS/SB 360 amends s. 395.0191, F.S., to add a new subsection concerning surgical technologists and surgical assistants. The bill provides various definitions. The bill prohibits a health care facility from employing or contracting with any person to perform the duties of a surgical assistant or surgical technologist unless that person is a certified surgical assistant or surgical technologist and also provides exceptions to these prohibitions.

The bill amends s. 395.0191, F.S.

II. Present Situation:

Role of Surgical Technologists

Surgical technologists, also called scrubs or operating room technicians,¹ work under the supervision of surgeons to ensure that the operating room environment is safe, that equipment functions properly, and that the operative procedure is conducted under conditions that maximize

¹ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition: Surgical Technologists*, available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos106.htm> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

patient safety. Surgical technologists are trained in aseptic technique and combine the knowledge of human anatomy, surgical procedures, and implementation tools and technologies to facilitate a physician's performance of invasive therapeutic and diagnostic procedures.² Currently, no statutes or rules are in place to regulate the practice of surgical technology in Florida.

The Association of Surgical Technology (AST) is the oldest and most recognized professional organization for surgical technologists and surgical assistants. The AST was established in 1969 by members of the American College of Surgeons, the American Hospital Association, and the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses to ensure that surgical technologists and surgical assistants have the knowledge and skills to administer patient care of the highest quality. Some of the AST's duties include creating and administering national certification procedures for surgical technologists, providing continuing education for such certification, working with national accrediting committees to establish standards for training programs, and advocating the interests of surgical technologists to government entities.³

The AST has published national guidelines for the scope of practice of surgical technologists.⁴ It designates three different categories of technologist, each with different functions. A scrub technologist maintains sterility and handles necessary instruments, supplies, and equipment during a surgical procedure. A circulating technologist assists the circulating nurse in obtaining additional instruments, supplies, and equipment during the procedure. A second assisting technologist maintains sterility and assists the surgeon and the surgeon's first assistant during the procedure. More detailed duties are as follows:

Scrub Technologist

- Check supplies and equipment needed for the surgical procedure.
- Scrub, gown, and glove.
- Set up the sterile table with instruments, supplies, equipment, and medications needed for the procedure.
- Perform appropriate counts with the circulator prior to the operation and before the incision is closed.
- Gown and glove the surgeon and assistants.
- Help in draping the sterile field.
- Pass instruments to the surgeon during the procedure.
- Prepare sterile dressings.
- Clean and prepare instruments for terminal sterilization.
- Assist other members of the surgical team with terminal cleaning of the operating room.
- Assist in preparing the operating room for the next patient.

Circulating Technologist

- Obtain appropriate sterile and unsterile items needed for the procedure.
- Open sterile supplies.

² AST, *Job Description: Surgical Technologist*, available at: http://www.ast.org/professionals/documents/2009_Surgical_Technologist_Job_Description_10.6_Final.pdf (last visited on March 18, 2013).

³ AST, *About Us*, available at : http://www.ast.org/aboutus/about_ast.aspx (last visited on March 18, 2013).

⁴ *Supra* fn. 2.

- Check the patient's chart, identify the patient, verify the surgery to be performed with consent forms, and bring the patient to the assigned operating room.
- Transfer the patient to the operating table.
- Assess the patient's comfort and safety and provide verbal and tactile reassurance.
- Assist anesthesia personnel.
- Position the patient, using appropriate equipment.
- Apply electrosurgical grounding pads, tourniquets, monitors, etc., before the procedure begins.
- Prepare the patient's skin prior to draping by the surgical team.
- Perform appropriate counts with the scrub nurse or technologist prior to the operation and before the incision is closed.
- Anticipate additional supplies needed during the procedure.
- Keep accurate records throughout the procedure.
- Properly care for specimens.
- Secure dressings after incision closure.
- Help transport the patient to the recovery room.
- Assist in cleaning the operating room and in preparing for the next patient.

Second Assisting Technologist

- Hold retractors or instruments as directed by the surgeon.
- Sponge or suction the operative site.
- Apply electrocautery to clamps on bleeding blood vessels.
- Cut suture material as directed by the surgeon.
- Connect drains to suction apparatus.
- Apply dressings to the closed wound.

Education and Certification

Surgical technologists must have a high school degree or equivalent and complete a training program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs or the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools. The training program includes classroom education in anatomy, microbiology, pharmacology, ethics, medical terminology, and other topics as well as supervised clinical experience. Surgical technologist training lasts from 9-24 months and culminates in a certificate, diploma, or associate's degree.

Professional certification is not required for employment as a surgical technologist, although most employers prefer to hire only certified individuals.⁵ Professional certification is available through the AST as a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST).⁶ Requirements for CST designation include graduation from an accredited surgical technology program (with special exceptions for military-trained technologists), payment of fees, and passage of an examination offered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).⁷ The CST certification is valid for four years; to renew, an individual must either retake and pass the

⁵ *Supra* fn. 1.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ NBSTSA, *CST Examinations*, available at: <http://nbstsa.org/examinations-cst.html> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

NBSTSA examination required for initial certification or complete 60 hours of continuing education. A renewal fee is also required.⁸

National certification may also be obtained from the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT),⁹ which awards the “Tech in Surgery-Certified (NCCT)” designation. Applicants must graduate from an NCCT-approved surgical technology program, complete required practical experience, and pass the organization’s certification exam. Applicants who did not graduate from an approved surgical technology program may also qualify for certification if they have accrued some amount of practical experience, which varies depending on the situation. Passage of the examination and payment of fees is still required, however.¹⁰ The NCCT certification must be renewed annually by completing 14 hours of continuing education and paying a recertification fee.¹¹

Currently, there are approximately 4,800 surgical technologists employed in Florida. Of these, more than 3,400 are CSTs, and a few dozen hold the Tech in Surgery-Certified (NCCT) designation.¹²

Role of Surgical First Assistants

Surgical assistants provide aid in exposure, hemostasis, closure, and other intraoperative technical functions under the direct supervision of surgeons to help carry out safe operations with optimal results for patients. In addition to intraoperative duties, surgical assistants also perform preoperative and postoperative duties to better facilitate proper patient care.¹³ Surgical first assistants provide primary assistance to the primary surgeon, must be listed on the operative record as first assistants, and cannot be involved in any other role during the procedure.¹⁴

The primary professional organizations for surgical assistants are the Association of Surgical Technology (AST) and the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA). The AST was established in 1969 by members of the American College of Surgeons, the American Hospital Association, and the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses to ensure that surgical technologists and surgical assistants have the knowledge and skills to administer patient care of the highest quality.¹⁵ The NSAA was formed by surgical assistants in 1983 and was the nation’s

⁸ NBSTSA, *Renewal Options*, available at: <http://nbstsa.org/renewal/index.html> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

⁹ The NCCT is an independent entity which provides competency examinations and certifications for a variety of allied health professions, including medical assistants, phlebotomy technicians, patient care technicians, surgical technologists, and medical office assistants. It is not a professional organization. (Source: NCCT, *National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT)*, <http://www.ncctinc.com/General/>, last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹⁰ NCCT, *Certification Information*, available at: <http://www.ncctinc.com/Certifications/> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹¹ NCCT, *Recertification/CE*, available at <http://www.ncctinc.com/CE/> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹² Email correspondence with the Florida State Assembly of the Association of Surgical Technologists. A copy of this correspondence is on file with the Senate Health Policy Committee.

¹³ Association of Surgical Technologists, *Job Description: Surgical Assistant*, available at: http://www.ast.org/professionals/documents/2011_%20Surgical%20Assistant_Job_Description_4.5.pdf (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹⁴ American Board of Surgical Assistants, *Definitions*, available at: <http://www.absa.net/definitions.php> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹⁵ AST, *About Us*, available at : http://www.ast.org/aboutus/about_ast.aspx (last visited on March 18, 2013).

first organization to provide standards for competency, professionalism, and scope of practice in the field.¹⁶

Duties within the scope of practice of a surgical assistant include positioning the patient; providing visualization of the operative site, including appropriate placement of retractors, suctioning and sponging, and manipulation of suture materials; assisting with hemostasis; participating in volume replacement or autotransfusion techniques, as appropriate; assisting with wound closure, including administration of sutures and subcutaneous injection of local anesthetics; selecting and applying wound dressings; and providing assistance in securing drainage systems to tissue.¹⁷ Surgical assistants must be familiar with operating room procedures and able to anticipate the needs of the surgeon.¹⁸

Surgical First Assistants in Statute

Registered nurses licensed under ch. 464, F.S., may serve as surgical first assistants if they are certified in perioperative nursing through a year-long training program fulfilling certain conditions. Such nurses may be reimbursed by insurance companies for their first assistant services at a rate not less than 80 percent of what a physician would be paid for the same services.¹⁹

Physician assistants may also be reimbursed by insurance companies for surgical first assistant services if they act as substitutes for physicians who would have performed the same services.²⁰

National Certification of Surgical First Assistants

AST: Certified Surgical First Assistant

An applicant for the Certified Surgical First Assistant (CSFA) designation must fulfill one of the following:

- Be a graduate of a surgical assistant program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP);
- Hold current certification as a Certified Surgical Technologist from the AST, have participated in at least 350 cases within the last four years, and have completed at least two full years of surgical first assistant experience; or
- Hold current surgical assistant certification from the NSAA or the American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA), have completed 50 hours of AST-approved continuing education within the last two years, show proof of operative case experience, and have at least an associate's degree.

Eligible applicants may register to take the CSFA exam offered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).²¹ The NBSTSA was previously known

¹⁶ NSAA, *Welcome*, available at: <http://www.nsa.net/index.php> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹⁷ *Supra* fn. 12.

¹⁸ NSAA, *Scope of Practice*, available at: http://www.nsa.net/scope_of_practice.php (last visited on March 18, 2013).

¹⁹ Sections 464.027 and 409.906(21), F.S.

²⁰ Section 627.419(6), F.S.

²¹ Edu-Search, *Surgical Technology Certification*, available at: <http://www.surgicaltechnologists.net/education/certification> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

as the Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist (LCCST). After passage of the exam and payment of \$290 in fees, an applicant may be certified.²²

The CSFA certification must be renewed every four years either by retaking and passing the initial certification examination or completing 75 hours of continuing education approved by the AST. Recertification by examination costs \$499.²³ Recertification by continuing education costs \$6 per credit hour for AST members and \$400 for non-members.²⁴

More than 2,100 people currently hold CSFA certification.²⁵

NSAA: Certified Surgical Assistant

Applicants for the Certified Surgical Assistant (CSA) designation must be graduates of approved surgical assistant training programs (there is one in Florida) or provide documentation of 2,250 hours of assisting experience along with several letters of reference from supervising surgeons. Applicants must also pass a multiple-choice examination offered by the NSAA which covers subjects such as anatomy, medical terminology, technical surgical skills, sterile technique, and anesthesia, and pay \$400 in fees. Discounts apply for recent graduates and military personnel, and certification by endorsement is available to nurses, physician assistants, and other practitioners under certain conditions.

The CSAs must be recertified every two years by completing 50 hours of approved continuing education or retaking and passing the initial certification exam. Recertification fees for NSAA non-members are \$700 if via continuing education and \$900 if via reexamination. Fees for NSAA members are \$100 if via continuing education or reexamination.^{26,27}

More than 1,300 people currently hold CSA certification nationally.²⁸

ABSA: Surgical Assistant-Certified

To be eligible to for ABSA certification, an applicant must hold at least an associate's degree with a "C" grade or higher in specified college-level courses, have completed an ABSA- or CAAHEP-approved surgical assistant training program, and have passed the ABSA Surgical Assistant-Certified (SA-C) examination. The examination consists of both multiple-choice and practical components and is offered four times per year in Miami, Chicago, New Jersey, and Houston. Payment of a \$710 fee is also required.

The SA-C certification must be renewed biennially by retaking and passing the initial certification exam or by completing certain professional development activities. Such activities include reading professional journals, presenting at a hospital seminar, publishing clinical research, and attending medical conferences. Each person must also document participation as a surgical first assistant in either 400 surgical cases or 1,500 procedure hours and hold current

²² NBSTSA, *CSFA Examination*, available at: <http://nbstsa.org/examinations-csfa.html> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

²³ NBSTSA, *Renewal Options*, available at: <http://nbstsa.org/renewal/index.html> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

²⁴ AST, *Certification*, available at: <http://www.ast.org/membership/certification.aspx> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

²⁵ Telephone conversation with NBSTSA staff.

²⁶ NSAA, *FAQs*, available at: <http://nsaa.net/faq.php> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

²⁷ NSAA, *Certification*, available at: <http://www.nsaa.net/requirements.php> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

²⁸ Telephone conversation with NSAA staff.

certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), advanced cardiac life support (ACLS), or pediatric advanced life support (PALS). Recertification via examination costs \$180, while recertification via professional development costs \$100.²⁹

More than 1,400 people currently hold active SA-C certification.³⁰

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 395.0191, F.S., to add a new subsection concerning surgical technologists and surgical assistants. The bill provides definitions for “certified surgical assistant,” “certified surgical technologist,” “surgeon,” “surgical assistant,” and “surgical technologist.”

The bill states that a facility may not employ or contract with any person to perform the duties of a surgical assistant or surgical technologist unless that person is a certified surgical assistant or certified surgical technologist. These employment prohibitions do not apply to:

- A person employed or contracted to perform the duties of a surgical technologist or surgical assistant at any time between January 1, 2013, and July 1, 2013;
- Any health care practitioner as defined in ch. 456, F.S., or any student, if the duties performed fall within the scope of the practitioner’s or the student’s training and practice; or
- Any person enrolled in a surgical technology or surgical assisting training program accredited by CAAHEP, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), or another accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. Such a person may practice for one year after completion of a training program before he or she is required to be certified.

Section 2 provides an effective date of July 1, 2013.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

²⁹ ABSA, *Candidate Information Booklet and Certification Examination Review Guide 2011-2012*, available at: http://www.absa.net/pdf/ABSA_Guide_2011-2012.pdf (last visited on March 18, 2013).

³⁰ ABSA, *History and Statistics*, available at: <http://www.absa.net/statistics.php> (last visited on March 18, 2013).

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

People wishing to practice as surgical technologists or surgical first assistants in Florida would be required to pay several hundred dollars in fees required to maintain national certification, unless they fall under one of the bill's exceptions.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Surgical technologists and surgical first assistants who do not meet any of the eligibility requirements in this bill will be unable to practice these occupations at Florida health care facilities. Businesses which offer continuing education courses and examination preparatory courses to surgical technologists and surgical first assistants are likely to receive more business as a result of this bill.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health reports no fiscal impact.³¹

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Health Policy on April 2, 2013:

The CS redesignates section 1 of the bill as an amendment to ch. 395, F.S., instead of as an undesignated section of law. It also amends the definitions of “surgical assistant” and “surgical technologist” and adds definitions for “certified surgical first assistant,” “certified surgical technologist,” and “surgeon.” The CS amends the employment limitations in the bill to state that health care facilities may not employ or contract with any person *to perform the duties of a surgical assistant or a surgical technologist* unless that person is appropriately certified. The bill also clarifies exceptions to these employment limitations, including for health care practitioners and students for whom surgical technology or surgical assisting services are already within their scope of training and practice and students at surgical technology or surgical assisting training programs accredited by ABHES, CAAHEP, or another accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

³¹ Department of Health, *2013 Bill Analysis for SB 360*. A copy is on file with the Senate Health Policy Committee.

The CS deletes redundant provisions concerning inspections of health care facilities and rulemaking authority and removes provisions relating to insurance reimbursement of surgical assistant services.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
