

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** CS/HB 309 Prohibited Acts by Health Care Practitioners

**SPONSOR(S):** Health & Human Services Committee, Massullo

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Health Quality Subcommittee	12 Y, 2 N	Siples	McElroy
2) Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee	10 Y, 0 N	Mielke	Clark
3) Health & Human Services Committee	17 Y, 0 N, As CS	Siples	Calamas

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA), within the Department of Health (DOH), has general regulatory authority over health care practitioners. The MQA works in conjunction with 22 boards and four councils to license and regulate seven types of health care facilities and more than 40 health care professions, including allopathic physicians, osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, dentists, and chiropractic physicians.

An unlicensed individual may be subject to administrative action or criminal penalties if the individual states or otherwise implies that he or she is a licensed medical professional. This may include the use of certain terms or titles that the public generally associates with a specific medical profession. DOH does not license a physician's specialty or sub-specialty based upon board certification, but does limit who can hold themselves out as board-certified specialists.

CS/HB 309 prohibits a health care practitioner from knowingly using certain names or titles if the health care practitioner is not authorized under the law to practice as an allopathic physician, osteopathic physician, podiatric physician, dentist, or chiropractic physician. The bill requires DOH to issue a notice to cease and desist to a practitioner who violates the bill's provisions. If the health care practitioner does not correct the violation, DOH must issue an order imposing a citation and daily fine, reprimand or letter of concern, or suspension of license.

The bill authorizes DOH to adopt rules to implement its provisions.

The bill has an indeterminate, but likely insignificant, negative fiscal impact on DOH, which current resources are adequate to absorb. The bill has no fiscal impact on local governments.

The bill takes effect upon becoming law.

# FULL ANALYSIS

## I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

#### Present Situation

##### **Licensure and Regulation of Physicians**

The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA), within the Department of Health (DOH), has general regulatory authority over health care practitioners.<sup>1</sup> The MQA works in conjunction with 22 boards and four councils to license and regulate seven types of health care facilities and more than 40 health care professions, including Medical Doctors (allopathic physicians), Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (osteopathic physicians), and Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (podiatric physicians).<sup>2</sup> Each profession is regulated by an individual practice act and by ch. 456, F.S., which provides general regulatory and licensure authority for the MQA.

##### Allopathic Physician Licensure

Chapter 458, F.S., provides for the licensure and regulation of the practice of medicine by the Florida Board of Medicine (allopathic board) in conjunction with DOH. The chapter imposes requirements for licensure examination and licensure by endorsement.

##### *Allopathic Licensure Requirements*

An individual seeking to be licensed by examination as an allopathic physician must, among other things:

- Complete 2 years of post-secondary education which includes, at a minimum, courses in fields such as anatomy, biology, and chemistry prior to entering medical school;
- Meet one of the following medical education and postgraduate training requirements:
  - Graduate from an allopathic medical school recognized and approved by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Office of Education or recognized by an appropriate governmental body of a U.S. territorial jurisdiction, and have completed at least one year of approved residency training;
  - Graduate from an allopathic foreign medical school registered with the World Health Organization and certified pursuant to statute as meeting the standards required to accredit U.S. medical schools, and have completed at least one year of approved residency training; or
  - Graduate from an allopathic foreign medical school that has not been certified pursuant to statute; have an active, valid certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG),<sup>3</sup> have passed that commission's examination; and have completed an approved residency or fellowship of at least 2 years in one specialty area; and
- Obtain a passing score on:
  - The United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE);

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to s. 456.001(4), F.S., health care practitioners are defined to include acupuncturists, physicians, physician assistants, chiropractors, podiatrists, naturopaths, dentists, dental hygienists, optometrists, nurses, nursing assistants, pharmacists, midwives, speech language pathologists, nursing home administrators, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, dieticians, athletic trainers, orthotists, prosthetists, electrologists, massage therapists, clinical laboratory personnel, medical physicists, dispensers of optical devices or hearing aids, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and psychotherapists, among others.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, *Annual Report and Long-Range Plan, Fiscal Year 2018-2019*, 6, available at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/licensing-and-regulation/reports-and-publications/documents/annual-report-1819.pdf> (last visited October 29, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> A graduate of a foreign medical school does not need to present an ECFMG certification or pass its exam if the graduate received his or bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. college or university, studied at a medical school recognized by the World Health Organization, and has completed all but the internship or social service requirements, has passed parts I and II of the National Board Medical Examiners licensing examination or the ECFMG equivalent examination. Section 458.311, F.S.

- A combination of the USMLE, the examination of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc. (FLEX), or the examination of the National Board of Medical Examiners up to the year 2000; or
- The Special Purpose Examination of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States (SPEX), if the applicant was licensed on the basis of a state board examination, is currently licensed in at least one other jurisdiction of the United States or Canada, and has practiced for a period of at least 10 years.<sup>4</sup>

An individual who holds an active license to practice medicine in another jurisdiction may seek licensure by endorsement to practice medicine in Florida.<sup>5</sup> The applicant must meet the same requirements for licensure by examination. To qualify for licensure by endorsement, the applicant must also submit evidence of the licensed active practice of medicine in another jurisdiction for at least 2 of the preceding 4 years, or evidence of successful completion of either a board-approved postgraduate training program within 2 years preceding filing of an application or a board-approved clinical competency examination within the year preceding the filing of an application for licensure.

### Osteopathic Physician Licensure

Chapter 459, F.S., provides for the licensure and regulation of the practice of medicine by the Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine (osteopathic board) in conjunction with DOH. The chapter imposes requirements for licensure by examination and licensure by endorsement.

#### *Osteopathic Licensure Requirements*

An individual seeking to be licensed as an osteopathic physician must, among other things:<sup>6</sup>

- Graduate from a medical college recognized and approved by the American Osteopathic Association;
- Successfully complete a resident internship of at least 12 months in a hospital approved by the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association or any other internship approved by the osteopathic board; and
- Obtain a passing score, as established by rule of the osteopathic board, on the examination conducted by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners or other examination approved by the osteopathic board, no more than five years prior to applying for licensure.<sup>7</sup>

If an applicant for a license to practice osteopathic medicine is licensed in another state, the applicant must have actively practiced osteopathic medicine within the two years prior to applying for licensure in this state.

### Podiatric Physician Licensure

Chapter 460, F.S., provides for the licensure and regulation of the practice of podiatric medicine by the Florida Board of Podiatric Medicine (podiatric board) in conjunction with DOH. The chapter imposes requirements for licensure by examination and licensure by endorsement.

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<sup>4</sup> Section 458.311(1), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 458.313, F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 459.0055(1), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> However, if an applicant has been actively licensed in another state, the initial licensure in the other state must have occurred no more than five years after the applicant obtained the passing score on the licensure examination.

### *Podiatric Licensure Requirements*

An individual seeking to be licensed as a podiatric physician must, among other things:

- Graduate from a school or college of podiatric medicine or chiropody recognized and approved by the Council on Podiatry Education of the American Podiatric Medical Association;
- Successfully complete a one-year residency program approved by the podiatric board or have continuously practiced for 10 years in another state; and
- Obtain a passing score on the three parts of the national examination conducted by the National Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners.<sup>8</sup>

### Dentist Licensure

The Board of Dentistry, in conjunction with DOH, regulates dental practice in Florida, including dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants under the Dental Practice Act.<sup>9</sup> A dentist is licensed to examine, diagnose, treat, and care for conditions within the human oral cavity and its adjacent tissues and structures.<sup>10</sup>

### *Dental Licensure Requirements*

Any person wishing to practice dentistry in this state must apply to DOH and meet specified requirements. To qualify to take the Florida dental licensure examination, an applicant must be 18 years of age or older, be a graduate of a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association or be a student in the final year of a program at an accredited institution, and have successfully completed the NBDE dental examination.

Section 466.006, F.S., requires dentistry licensure applicants to sit for and pass the following licensure examinations:

- The National Board of Dental Examiners dental examiner (NBDE);
- A written examination on Florida laws and rules regulating the practice of dentistry; and
- A practical examination, which is the American Dental Licensing Examination developed by the American Board of Dental Examiners, Inc., and graded by a Florida-licensed dentist employed by DOH for such purpose.<sup>11</sup>

### Chiropractic Physician Licensure

The Board of Chiropractic Medicine, in conjunction with DOH, governs the licensure and regulation of chiropractic physicians under ch. 460, F.S. The practice of chiropractic medicine refers to a noncombative principle and practice consisting of the science and art of adjustment, manipulation, and treatment of the human body.<sup>12</sup>

### *Chiropractic Licensure Requirements*

To qualify to be licensed as a chiropractic physician, an applicant must:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- Be a graduate of an accredited chiropractic college;
- Successfully complete the certification examination and physiotherapy examination of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners; and

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<sup>8</sup> Rule 64B18-11.002, F.A.C.

<sup>9</sup> Section 466.004, F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 466.003(3), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> A passing score is valid for 365 days after the date the official examination results are published. A passing score on an examination obtained in another jurisdiction must be completed on or after October 1, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Section 460.403(9), F.S. and Rule 64B2-11.001, F.A.C.

- Obtain a passing score on the Florida Laws and Rules examination.

## Unlicensed Practice of a Health Care Profession

### *Administrative Penalties*

Florida law prohibits an individual from practicing a regulated health care profession without a license. An individual must meet minimum education and training requirements to become licensed and practice a health care profession.<sup>13</sup> An unlicensed individual providing healthcare services is subject to administrative and criminal penalties. DOH may issue a cease and desist letter to such a person and impose, by citation, an administrative penalty of up to \$5,000 per offense.<sup>14</sup> DOH may also seek a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for each offense through the circuit court, in addition to or in lieu of the administrative penalty.<sup>15</sup> An individual practicing, attempting to practice or offering to practice, a health care profession without an active, valid Florida license is subject to criminal penalties, in addition to any administrative and civil penalties incurred by the unlicensed individual.<sup>16</sup>

### *Criminal Penalties*

It is a third degree felony to practice medicine or attempt to practice medicine without a Florida license, and it is a first degree misdemeanor to lead the public to believe one is licensed to practice as a medical doctor or is engaged in the licensed practice of medicine, without holding a valid, active license.<sup>17</sup> It is a third degree felony to practice osteopathic medicine or attempt to practice osteopathic medicine without a Florida license.<sup>18</sup>

It is a third degree felony to practice podiatric medicine or attempt to practice medicine without a Florida license, and it is a first degree misdemeanor to use the title “podiatrist,” “doctor of podiatry,” “doctor of podiatric medicine,” “foot clinic,” “foot doctor,” “quiropedista,” or any other name, title, or phrase that would lead the public to believe that such person is practicing podiatric medicine, if the person does not hold a Florida license.<sup>19</sup>

It is a third degree felony to practice dentistry unless the person holds an active license to practice dentistry.<sup>20</sup> It is a first degree misdemeanor to use the name or title “dentist,” the letters “D.D.S.” or “D.M.D.,” or any other words, title, or phrase that would represent a person as being able to diagnose, treat, prescribe, or operate for any disease, injury, or condition of the teeth, jaws, or maxillofacial region unless the person holds an active dental license.<sup>21</sup>

It is a third degree felony to practice or attempt to practice chiropractic medicine without an active license to practice chiropractic medicine, and it is a first degree misdemeanor to use the title “chiropractic physician,” “doctor of chiropractic medicine,” or any other name or title that would lead the public to believe that such person is licensed as a chiropractic physician.<sup>22</sup>

## Board Certification and Florida Licensure

DOH does not license physicians by specialty or subspecialty; however, current law limits which physicians may hold themselves out as board-certified specialists. An allopathic physician may not hold himself or herself out as a board-certified specialist unless he or she has received formal recognition as

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<sup>13</sup> Section 456.065(1), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 456.065, F.S. Each day that the unlicensed practice continues after issuance of a notice to cease and desist constitutes a separate offense.

<sup>15</sup> Section 456.065(2)(c), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 456.065(2)(d), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 458.327, F.S. A third degree felony is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years and a fine not to exceed \$5,000. A first degree misdemeanor is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year and a fine not to exceed \$1,000. Penalties may be enhanced under certain circumstances. See ss. 775.082, 775.083, and 775.084.

<sup>18</sup> Section 459.013, F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 461.012, F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Section 466.026, F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Id.

<sup>22</sup> Section 460.411, F.S.It

a specialist from a specialty board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or other recognizing agency<sup>23</sup> approved by the allopathic board.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, an allopathic physician may not hold himself or herself out as a board-certified specialist in dermatology unless the recognizing agency, whether authorized in statute or by rule, is triennially reviewed and reauthorized by the allopathic board.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, an osteopathic physician may not hold himself or herself out as a board-certified specialist unless he or she has successfully completed the requirements for certification by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) or the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and is certified as a specialist by a certifying agency<sup>26</sup> approved by the board.<sup>27</sup>

A podiatric physician may not hold himself or herself out as possessing a credential or certification from an organization unless the organization is approved by the podiatric board.<sup>28</sup> By rule, the American Podiatric Medical Association, the National Council of Competency Assurance, or any of their recognized component or affiliate organizations are approved.<sup>29</sup>

A dentist may not hold himself or herself out as a specialist, or advertise membership in or specialty recognition by an accrediting organization, unless the dentist has completed a specialty education program approved by the American Dental Association and the Commission on Dental Accreditation and the dentist is:<sup>30</sup>

- Eligible for examination by an anatal specialty board recognized by the American Dental Association; or
- Is a diplomate of a national specialty board recognized by the American Dental Association.

If a dentist announces or advertises a specialty practice for which there is not an approved accrediting organization, the dentist must clearly state that the specialty is not recognized or that the accrediting organization has not been approved by the American Dental Association or the Florida Board of Dentistry in capital letters.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The allopathic board has approved the specialty boards of the ABMS as recognizing agencies. Rule 64B8-11.001(1)(f), F.A.C.

<sup>24</sup> Section 458.3312, F.S.

<sup>25</sup> Id.

<sup>26</sup> The osteopathic board has approved the specialty boards of the ABMS and AOA as recognizing agencies. Rule 64B15-14.001(h), F.A.C.

<sup>27</sup> Section 459.0152, F.S.

<sup>28</sup> Rule 64B18-14.004(i), F.A.C.

<sup>29</sup> Id.

<sup>30</sup> Section 466.0282, F.S. A dentist may also hold himself or herself out as a specialist if the dentist has continuously held himself or herself out as a specialist since December 31, 1964, in a specialty recognized by the American Dental Association.

<sup>31</sup> Section 466.0282(3), F.S.

## Effect of Proposed Legislation

CS/HB 309 prohibits a health care practitioner from using certain titles unless the health care practitioner is licensed and authorized to use such title as an allopathic physician under chapter 458, F.S., an osteopathic physician under chapter 459, F.S., a podiatric physician under chapter 461, or a dentist under chapter 466, F.S. DOH may impose penalties against any health care practitioner who knowingly uses one of the following titles but is not authorized to do so.

Family Physician	Gynecologist	Osteopath
Emergency Physician	Hematologist	Otologist
Surgeon	Hospitalist	Otolaryngologist
Medical Doctor	Internist	Otorhinolaryngologist
Dentist	Interventional Pain Medicine Physician	Pathologist
Doctor of Osteopathy	Laryngologist	Pediatrician
Doctor of Dental Medicine	Nephrologist	Pedodontist
Doctor of Dental Surgery	Neurologist	Periodontist
M.D.	Obstetrician	Physiatrist
D.M.D.	Oncologist	Podiatrist
D.D.S.	Ophthalmologist	Primary Care Physician
Anesthesiologist	Orthopedic Surgeon	Proctologist
Cardiologist	Orthopedist	Prosthodontist
Dermatologist	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon	Psychiatrist
Endodontist	Orthodontist	Radiologist
Endocrinologist	Orthopedist	Rheumatologist
Gastroenterologist		Rhinologist
General Practitioner		Urologist

In addition to these titles, the bill prohibits an unauthorized person from using any other words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia that indicates or implies that he or she is authorized to practice as such. The bill also authorizes an out-of state telehealth provider who is registered with the Board of Medicine, Board of Osteopathic Medicine, Board of Podiatric Medicine, or Board of Dentistry to provide services to Florida residents to use the above-listed titles.

The bill also authorizes:

- An individual licensed under chapter 460, F.S., or registered with the Board of Chiropractic Medicine as an out-of-state telehealth provider to use the title “doctor of chiropractic medicine” or “chiropractic physician”;
- A licensed chiropractic physician to use the title “chiropractic radiologist,” “chiropractic internist,” “chiropractic neurologist,” “chiropractic orthopedist,” or “chiropractic pediatrician,” if the licensed chiropractic physician has achieved diplomate or fellow status from the appropriate specialty board; and
- A licensed dentist to use the title “dental anesthesiologist,” “doctor of oral medicine,” “dental oral and maxillofacial radiologist,” “dental orthodontic and dentofacial orthopedist,” or “dental oral and maxillofacial pathologist,” if the licensed dentist has received diplomate status or board certification from the appropriate specialty board.

If DOH finds that a health care practitioner has violated this provision, the bill requires DOH to issue a notice to cease and desist to the health care practitioner. DOH must send the notice to the practitioner’s email address and by certified mail to the practitioner’s physical address, and to any other address at which the practitioner may be reached. If the practitioner to be in violation of this provision, DOH must issue an order imposing one of the following penalties:

- A citation and a daily fine;
- A reprimand or a letter of concern; or

- Suspension of the health care practitioner's license.

The bill takes effect upon becoming law.

**B. SECTION DIRECTORY:**

**Section 1:** Creates s. 456.0465, F.S.; relating to health care practitioners; prohibited actions.

**Section 2:** Provides an effective date of upon becoming law.

## **II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues:

DOH may experience an increase in revenue if health care practitioners are found to have violated the provisions of the bill and DOH imposes an administrative fine. It is not known how many health care practitioners may violate the provisions of the bill.

2. Expenditures:

DOH may experience an indeterminate, but likely insignificant, negative fiscal impact due to an increase in investigation and enforcement actions. It is not known how many health care practitioners may violate the provisions of the bill but it is estimated current resources are adequate to absorb these costs.<sup>32</sup>

**B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

**C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

Health care practitioners who are found to have violated the provisions of the bill may be required to pay an administrative fine or otherwise be disciplined.

**D. FISCAL COMMENTS:**

None.

## **III. COMMENTS**

**A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:**

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

**B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:**

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<sup>32</sup> Department of Health, *Agency Legislative Analysis for HB 309*, on file with the Health Quality Subcommittee.  
**STORAGE NAME:** h0309e.HHS  
**DATE:** 2/13/2020



The bill authorizes DOH to adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

**IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

On February 12, 2020, the Health and Human Services adopted a strike-all amendment and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The strike-all amendment:

- Moved the bill provisions to a newly created section of law.
- Revised the list of titles that may not be used by health care practitioners who are not licensed as physicians under chapters 458, 459, 461, or 466, F.S.
- Required DOH to issue a notice to cease and desist if it finds that a health care practitioner uses a title in violation of the bill's provisions and impose certain penalties if the violation continues.
- Created exceptions for titles related to certain chiropractic physicians and dentists who obtain diplomate or board certification status.
- Authorized DOH to adopt rules.

This analysis is drafted to the committee substitute as passed by the Health and Human Services Committee.