

Orthotics and Prosthetics Consumer Rights

Qualifications of an orthotist/prosthetist

An orthotist and prosthetist must be licensed to practice in Washington State.

To qualify for licensure, an applicant must possess a baccalaureate degree, or have completed a certification program in orthotics and/or prosthetics. The applicant must have completed a 1900 hour internship or residency for each discipline as well as a written examination.

Licensed orthotists evaluate, measure, design, fabricate, assemble, fit, adjust, and provide service. They provide the initial training necessary to accomplish the fit of an orthosis for the support, correction, or alleviation of a neuromuscular or musculoskeletal dysfunction, disease, injury, or deformity.

Licensed prosthetists evaluate, measure, design, fabricate, assemble, fit, align, adjust, and provide service. They provide the initial training necessary to accomplish the fit of a prosthesis through the replacement of external parts of the human body lost due to amputation or congenital deformities or absences.

Continued Competency

The purpose of continuing competency is to maintain and enhance the professional proficiency of services provided by licensed orthotists and prosthetists. A successful continuing competency program focuses on all aspects of the practice to ensure that the practitioner is competent to provide safe and quality care to patients.

Licensed orthotists and prosthetists accumulate continuing competency hours on an ongoing basis to maintain their license.

The Orthotics/Prosthetics Advisory Committee

The orthotic and prosthetic advisory committee is appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health. Two individuals licensed to practice in orthotics and/or prosthetics, a licensed physician, and two public members who are consumers of orthotic or prosthetic services serve on the committee. The primary duty of the committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the secretary on administrative rules, scope of practice issues and eligibility of applicants.

DOH Mission Statement

The Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of people in Washington State.

Provider Credential Search

You can check the status of a practitioner's licensing and disciplinary history through the Department of Health Home Page at www.doh.wa.gov. Click on Provider Credential Search in the directory, or call the Customer Service Center at (360) 236-4700

Discipline

The Secretary of the Department of Health is authorized by the legislature to discipline health care providers who violate the law.

How to Submit a Complaint

Anyone may report knowledge of professional misconduct by contacting the Department of Health to obtain the necessary forms. You may call (360) 236-4700 to discuss the circumstances. You will be encouraged to submit your complaint in writing.

The Complaint Process

When a complaint is received, the information is reviewed to determine whether the circumstances being reported violate the law and whether there is legal authority to take action. If it appears the conduct would constitute a violation, and there is legal authority to take action, the complaint is forwarded for an investigation.

The Department of Health staff manages each case throughout the complaint and disciplinary process.

They work with investigators, staff attorneys, and the Office of the Attorney General to identify violations and evaluate evidence. If the evidence does not support the circumstances contained in a complaint, the complaint is closed. If violations are found, the case is presented to a panel of members from the Department for approval to take action for unprofessional conduct.

When should you file a complaint?

You should consider filing a complaint if you believe that the actions of a health care provider were inappropriate or may have caused mental or physical harm to you or someone else.

The Department of Health cannot pursue problems that fall outside of its jurisdiction such as scheduling appointments, personality conflicts/rudeness, or disputes over bills or insurance. It also cannot help you bring a suit against a provider or get money back that you feel is owed to you.

Transmittal of Patient Information and Records

Chapter 70.02 RCW, Health Care Information Access and Disclosure, provides that a patient may request in writing, and receive a copy of the patient's health care information. The information must be provided within fifteen days. A reasonable fee may be charged and certain restrictions can apply.

Professional Organizations

The following organizations offer more information on the practice of orthotics and prosthetics:

- American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists: www.oandp.org
- American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics: www.abcop.org
- Board for Orthotic/Prosthetic Certification: www.bocusa.org
- National Commission on Orthotics and Prosthetics Education: www.ncope.org
- Amputee Coalition of America: www.amputee-coalition.org



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For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127. (TTY/TDD 1-800-833-6388)