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**AB-923 Respiratory care practitioners.** (2015-2016)

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**Assembly Bill No. 923**

**CHAPTER 253**

An act to amend Sections 3750 and 3755 of, and to add Section 3754.8 to, the Business and Professions Code, relating to healing arts.

[ Approved by Governor September 09, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 09, 2016. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 923, Steinorth. Respiratory care practitioners.

(1) Under the Respiratory Care Practice Act, the Respiratory Care Board of California licenses and regulates the practice of respiratory care and therapy. The act authorizes the board to order the denial, suspension, or revocation of, or the imposition of probationary conditions upon, a license issued under the act, for any of specified causes. A violation of the act is a crime.

This bill would include among those causes for discipline the employment of an unlicensed person who presents herself or himself as a licensed respiratory care practitioner when the employer should have known the person was not licensed. The bill would also include among those causes for discipline the provision of false statements or information on any form provided by the board or to any person representing the board during an investigation, probation monitoring compliance check, or any other enforcement-related action when the individual knew or should have known the statements or information was false.

The bill would provide that the expiration, cancellation, forfeiture, or suspension of a license, practice privilege, or other authority to practice respiratory care, the placement of a license on a retired status, or the voluntary surrender of a license by a licensee, does not deprive the board of jurisdiction to commence or proceed with any investigation of, or action or disciplinary proceeding against, the licensee, or to render a decision to suspend or revoke the license.

(2) Under the act the board may take action against a respiratory care practitioner who is charged with unprofessional conduct which includes, but is not limited to, repeated acts of clearly administering directly or indirectly inappropriate or unsafe respiratory care procedures, protocols, therapeutic regimens, or diagnostic testing or monitoring techniques, and violation of any provision for which the board may order the denial, suspension, or revocation of, or the imposition of probationary conditions upon, a license. The act provides that engaging in repeated acts of unprofessional conduct is a crime.

This bill would expand the definition of unprofessional conduct to include any act of abuse towards a patient and any act of administering unsafe respiratory care procedures, protocols, therapeutic regimens, or diagnostic testing or monitoring techniques. Because this bill would change the definition of a crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

### **SECTION 1.** Section 3750 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**3750.** The board may order the denial, suspension, or revocation of, or the imposition of probationary conditions upon, a license issued under this chapter, for any of the following causes:

(a) Advertising in violation of Section 651 or Section 17500.

(b) Fraud in the procurement of any license under this chapter.

(c) Employing an unlicensed person who presents herself or himself as a licensed respiratory care practitioner when the employer knew or should have known the person was not licensed.

(d) Conviction of a crime that substantially relates to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a respiratory care practitioner. The record of conviction or a certified copy thereof shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction.

(e) Impersonating or acting as a proxy for an applicant in any examination given under this chapter.

(f) Negligence in his or her practice as a respiratory care practitioner.

(g) Conviction of a violation of this chapter or of Division 2 (commencing with Section 500), or violating, or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate this chapter or Division 2 (commencing with Section 500).

(h) The aiding or abetting of any person to violate this chapter or any regulations duly adopted under this chapter.

(i) The aiding or abetting of any person to engage in the unlawful practice of respiratory care.

(j) The commission of any fraudulent, dishonest, or corrupt act that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a respiratory care practitioner.

(k) Falsifying, or making grossly incorrect, grossly inconsistent, or unintelligible entries in any patient, hospital, or other record.

(l) Changing the prescription of a physician and surgeon, or falsifying verbal or written orders for treatment or a diagnostic regime received, whether or not that action resulted in actual patient harm.

(m) Denial, suspension, or revocation of any license to practice by another agency, state, or territory of the United States for any act or omission that would constitute grounds for the denial, suspension, or revocation of a license in this state.

(n) (1) Except for good cause, the knowing failure to protect patients by failing to follow infection control guidelines of the board, thereby risking transmission of bloodborne infectious diseases from licensee to patient, from patient to patient, and from patient to licensee. In administering this subdivision, the board shall consider referencing the standards, regulations, and guidelines of the State Department of Public Health developed pursuant to Section 1250.11 of the Health and Safety Code and the standards, regulations, and guidelines pursuant to the California Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1973 (Part 1 (commencing with Section 6300) of Division 5 of the Labor Code) for preventing the transmission of HIV, hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens in health care settings. As necessary, the board shall consult with the California Medical Board, the Board of Podiatric Medicine, the Dental Board of California, the Board of Registered Nursing, and the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians, to encourage appropriate consistency in the implementation of this subdivision.

(2) The board shall seek to ensure that licensees are informed of the responsibility of licensees and others to follow infection control guidelines, and of the most recent scientifically recognized safeguards for minimizing the risk of transmission of bloodborne infectious diseases.

(o) Incompetence in his or her practice as a respiratory care practitioner.

(p) A pattern of substandard care or negligence in his or her practice as a respiratory care practitioner, or in any capacity as a health care worker, consultant, supervisor, manager or health facility owner, or as a party responsible for the care of another.

(q) Providing false statements or information on any form provided by the board or to any person representing the board during an investigation, probation monitoring compliance check, or any other enforcement-related action when the individual knew or should have known the statements or information was false.

**SEC. 2.** Section 3754.8 is added to the Business and Professions Code, to read:

**3754.8.** The expiration, cancellation, forfeiture, or suspension of a license, practice privilege, or other authority to practice respiratory care by operation of law or by order or decision of the board or a court of law, the placement of a license on a retired status, or the voluntary surrender of the license by a licensee shall not deprive the board of jurisdiction to commence or proceed with any investigation of, or action or disciplinary proceeding against, the licensee, or to render a decision to suspend or revoke the license.

**SEC. 3.** Section 3755 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**3755.** (a) The board may take action against a respiratory care practitioner who is charged with unprofessional conduct in administering, or attempting to administer, direct or indirect respiratory care in any care setting. Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) Repeated acts of clearly administering directly or indirectly inappropriate respiratory care procedures, protocols, therapeutic regimens, or diagnostic testing or monitoring techniques.
- (2) Any act of administering unsafe respiratory care procedures, protocols, therapeutic regimens, or diagnostic testing or monitoring techniques.
- (3) Any act of abuse towards a patient.
- (4) A violation of any provision of Section 3750.

(b) The board may determine unprofessional conduct involving any and all aspects of respiratory care performed by anyone licensed as a respiratory care practitioner.

(c) Any person who engages in repeated acts of unprofessional conduct shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by imprisonment for a term not to exceed six months, or by both that fine and imprisonment.

**SEC. 4.** No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.