



SUMMARY:

This measure will increase the statutory pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratio, in an effort to support better the pharmacy profession and allow for more direct patient access to clinical services at pharmacies.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past several decades, the pharmacy practice has made significant advancements, specifically intended to increase the amount of interaction between pharmacists and the patients they serve. In 1991, legislation was approved to authorize the use of pharmacy technicians in the prescription-dispensing process so pharmacists could better perform patient counseling, which was a then-new requirement. At this time, a pharmacist was allowed to supervise one technician, establishing a 1:1 ratio.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the state endured a serious pharmacist shortage. As a result, the technician ratio was revisited to address the shortage and to allow more opportunities for direct pharmacist to patient care. Through AB 536 (Bates, 2001) the ratio was expanded to 3:2, allowing an additional pharmacist to supervise up to two technicians.

In 2013, landmark legislation was passed which significantly expanded the scope of practice for pharmacists. SB 493 (Hernandez, 2013) expanded the list of clinical services that could be provided to patients in community pharmacies. Today, pharmacists are allowed to perform a variety of important health care services, including:

- Providing consultation on drug therapy, disease management and prevention
- Furnishing self-administered hormonal contraceptives, nicotine replacement products, travel medicines, and Naloxone
- Administering all immunizations to patients 3 years and older
- Ordering and interpret diagnostic tests while managing a patient's drug therapy
- Obtaining Advanced Practice Pharmacist (APP) recognition.

Despite these noteworthy advancements, the pharmacy technician ratio has not kept pace. It has been 16 years since the ratio has been modified, and although legislative changes have enabled pharmacists to utilize their license to the fullest and provide more patient interaction, they lack the support necessary to maintain pharmacy dispensing functions today.

EXISTING LAW:

CA Business and Professions Code § 4115 (f)(1) specifies that one pharmacist may supervise only one technician (1:1). An additional pharmacist may supervise up to two technicians making the highest ratio allowed in a pharmacy 3:2.

WHAT THE BILL DOES:

AB 1589 increases the pharmacy technician ratio to allow a pharmacist to supervise up to 4 technicians, based on their professional judgment.

SUPPORT: California Retailers Assn.
National Assn. of Chain Drug Stores

OPPOSITION: None at this time

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