

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1637 (Caloza) – As Amended April 8, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions Vote: 19 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill states that a physician's patient notes are the responsibility of that physician. The bill prohibits anyone other than the authoring physician from modifying the notes, except as specified.

The bill specifies that a physician's patient notes, after-visit summaries, and diagnosis and treatment plans may be altered, modified, or edited by the physician or the following persons:

- 1) A scribe, medical assistant, or other authorized individual acting under the authority delegated by the authoring physician.
- 2) A physician who is adding to an authoring physician's patient notes if patient care has been transferred to them from the authoring physician.
- 3) A physician altering, modifying, or editing the patient notes of a physician postgraduate who is in training and being supervised by the physician.

4) **FISCAL EFFECT:**

The Osteopathic Medical Board of California (OMBC) and the Medical Board of California (MBC) anticipate minor and absorbable costs to address a small number of additional documentation-related complaints, staff training, updating written guidance, communications to licensees, and creation of a new violation code.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the Union of American Physicians and Dentists. According to the author:

Under current law, any person has the authority to electronically alter medical documentation, leaving patient care vulnerable to manipulation, misinformation, and irreversible harm. There is a discrepancy with who is responsible and who is held accountable for medical record-keeping. [This bill] draws clear lines of responsibility by ensuring that physician-authored notes, diagnoses, and treatment plans cannot be modified by anyone other than the physician who created them.

- 2) **Background.** The Medical Practice Act (Act) requires a physician to maintain adequate and accurate records of the services they provide to their patients for a minimum of seven years. Failure to do so constitutes unprofessional conduct, meaning the physician is subject to disciplinary action by the MBC or the OMBC. The Act does not specify what constitutes a failure to maintain the records other than adequacy, accuracy, and retention. The sponsor argues that this lack of specificity opens the door for someone other than a physician to modify the physician's records. This bill reinforces the responsibility of the authoring physician for their patient records.

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