

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1703 (Hart) – As Amended February 23, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions Vote: 19 - 0

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

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits a person who is not licensed by the Osteopathic Medical Board of California (OMBC) from using “osteopath,” “doctor of osteopathy,” or “D.O.,” or otherwise indicating or implying that they are a licensed doctor of osteopathy or licensed physician, when offering or providing a service to treat a medical or physical condition, and provides OMBC with explicit enforcement authority to address misrepresentation and unlicensed activity.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Prohibits a person who is not licensed by the OMBC from using “osteopath,” “doctor of osteopathy,” or “D.O.,” or indicating or implying that they are a licensed osteopath, licensed doctor of osteopathy, or licensed physician and surgeon when offering or providing a service to treat a medical or physical condition.
- 2) Provides that a person who violates the above title protections is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- 3) Prohibits unlicensed alternative or complementary care practitioners from providing osteopathic manipulative treatment, as defined.

FISCAL EFFECT:

OMBC anticipates enforcing approximately 40 cases of misrepresentation and unlicensed activity, resulting in minor and absorbable costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of California (OPSC). According to the author:

[This bill] addresses a gap in current law where patients are protected when seeking care from a medical doctor (MD), but not when choosing a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO). There are strict protections that prevent non-physicians from advertising themselves as MDs, but not equivalent safeguards to stop those same individuals from advertising themselves as osteopaths or claiming they can provide licensed care. This bill will ensure only DOs who are licensed and medically trained to treat patients can advertise themselves as

such and perform licensed services. Californians should be able to trust the quality of licensed medical practitioners and deserve the right to make informed decisions when choosing a doctor, no matter the type of care they seek.

- 2) **Background.** According to information provided by OPSC, unlicensed, internationally trained ‘osteopaths’ have been opening practices in California, offering medical treatments that overlap with services traditionally performed by licensed physicians. These individuals operate without formal licensure requirements or governmental oversight and claim to treat conditions ranging from anxiety and depression to chronic pelvic pain and vertigo, and use professional-sounding titles, such as “DO (CAN)” or “D.O.M.P.” OPSC contends the unlicensed practitioners create confusion for patients.

Analysis Prepared by: Allegra Kim / APPR. / (916) 319-2081