
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1703 (Hart) - Osteopathic physicians and surgeons: unauthorized practice: unauthorized use of titles

Version: June 9, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: B., P. & E.D. 11 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 1703 prohibits a person who is not licensed by the Osteopathic Medical Board of California (OMBC) from professionally using the title “osteopath” or other terms implying they are a licensed osteopathic physician and surgeon, and prohibits alternative or complementary care providers from providing osteopathic manipulative treatment without a license.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown, potentially significant workload cost pressures to the state funded trial court system to adjudicate any misdemeanor violations resulting from this bill (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund). The fiscal impact of this bill to the courts will depend on many unknowns, including the number of cases filed and the factors unique to each case. An eight-hour court day costs approximately \$8,000 in staff in workload. If court days exceed 10, costs to the trial courts could reach hundreds of thousands of dollars. While the courts are not funded on a workload basis, an increase in workload could result in delayed court services and would put pressure on the General Fund to fund additional staff and resources and to increase the amount appropriated to backfill for trial court operations.
- OMBC anticipates minor and absorbable enforcement workload to address an estimated 40 cases of misrepresentation and unlicensed activity (OMBC Contingent Fund).

Background: Title protection is one of the forms of regulation of professional services that can be imposed by the Legislature to protect patients and consumers by reserving the use of words, terms, initials, and titles for individuals who have met certain requirements to demonstrate competence. As described in the context of the Legislature’s “sunrise review” process, title protection is frequently included as part of a licensing act, where only persons who meet predetermined standards are allowed to work at an occupation. When licensure is required for a profession, both the scope of practice and the use of titles describing that title are protected.

Unlawful use of a title is enforced by regulatory entities, including healing arts boards, consistent with the process for enforcement against unlicensed practice. Typically, these types of violations of a practice act constitute a misdemeanor. Many boards also possess the authority to cite and fine violators, or to engage in other actions to compel compliance with the law. The unauthorized use of professional titles in advertising can also form the basis for prosecutions against individuals or entities for false advertising or unfair business practices.

Proposed Law:

- Prohibits a person who is not licensed by the OMBC from using the word “osteopath,” using the phrase “doctor of osteopathy,” using the initials “D.O.,” or indicating or implying that they are a licensed osteopath, licensed doctor of osteopathy, or physician and surgeon licensed by MBC when offering or providing a service to treat a medical or physical condition.
- Provides that a person who violates the above title protections is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- Prohibits unlicensed alternative or complementary care practitioners from providing osteopathic manipulative treatment.
- Defines “osteopathic manipulative treatment” as the therapeutic application of manually guided forces to alleviate somatic dysfunction.
- Makes technical changes.

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