STATE OF NEW YORK

469

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 9, 2019

Introduced by M. of A. PAULIN, GOTTFRIED, HUNTER, LIFTON, TAYLOR, WILLIAMS, D'URSO, STECK, THIELE -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. PALMESANO -- read once and referred to the Committee on Labor

AN ACT to amend the workers' compensation law, in relation to diagnosis, care and treatment of injured employees by certified nurse practitioners

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The workers' compensation law is amended by adding a new section 13-q to read as follows:

§ 13-q. Diagnosis, care and treatment of injured employees by certified nurse practitioners. 1. Where the term "nurse practitioner" is used in this section, such term shall mean a person who is duly licensed as a registered professional nurse, certified as a nurse practitioner under section six thousand nine hundred ten of the education law, and practicing in compliance with the requirements of section six thousand nine hundred two of the education law.

(a) Notwithstanding the requirements of sections thirteen and thirteen-a of this article, an injured employee, injured under circumstances which make such an injury compensable under this article, may lawfully be diagnosed and treated by a nurse practitioner and authorized by the chair to render health care services pursuant to this section. Such services shall be within the scope of the nurse practitioner as defined in paragraph (a) of subdivision three of section six thousand nine hundred two of the education law, and shall include performing independent medical examinations.

(b) A nurse practitioner rendering service pursuant to this section shall maintain records of the patient's condition and nurse practitioner treatment, and such records or reports shall be submitted to the chair on such forms and at such times as the chair may require.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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2. A nurse practitioner who is desirous of being authorized to render healthcare services under this section shall file an application for authorization under this section with the nurse practitioner practice committee. The applicant shall agree to refrain from subsequently treating for remuneration, as a private patient, any person seeking nurse practitioner healthcare services, in connection with, or as a result of, any injury compensable under this chapter, if he or she has been removed from the list of nurse practitioners authorized to render services under this chapter. This agreement shall run to the benefit of the injured person so treated, and shall be available as a defense in any action by such nurse practitioner for payment for treatment rendered by such nurse practitioner after being removed from the list of nurse practitioners authorized to render healthcare services under this section. The nurse practitioner practice committee, if it deems such certified nurse practitioner duly qualified, shall recommend to the chair that such person be authorized to render healthcare services under this section. Such recommendations shall be only advisory to the chair and shall not be binding or conclusive. The chair shall prepare and establish a schedule for the state or schedules limited to defined localities of charges and fees for nurse practitioner treatment and care, to be determined in accordance with and be subject to change pursuant to rules promulgated by the chair. Before preparing such schedule for the state or schedules for limited localities the chair shall request the nurse practitioner practice committee to submit to such chair a report on the amount of remuneration deemed by such committee to be fair and adequate for the types of services to be rendered under this chapter, but consideration shall be given to the view of other interested parties. The amounts payable by the employer for such treatment and services shall be the fees and charges established by such schedule.

3. No claim for nurse practitioner services shall be valid and enforceable as against the employer or employees unless within forty-eight hours following the first treatment the nurse practitioner giving such care or treatment furnishes to the employer and directly to the chair a preliminary notice of such injury and treatment, and within fifteen days thereafter a more complete report and subsequent thereto progress reports as requested in writing by the chair, board, employer or insurance carrier, at intervals of not less than three weeks apart or at less frequent intervals if requested on forms prescribed by the chair. The board may excuse the failure to give such notices within the designated periods when it finds it to be in the interest of justice to do so.

4. Fees for nurse practitioner services shall be payable only to a duly certified nurse practitioner, or to the agent, executor or administrator of the estate of such nurse practitioner. No nurse practitioner rendering treatment to a compensation claimant shall collect or receive a fee from such claimant within this state, but shall have recourse for payment of services rendered only to the employer under the provisions of this section.

5. Whenever his or her attendance at a hearing is required, the nurse practitioner of the injured employee shall be entitled to receive a fee from the employer in an amount to be fixed by the board, in addition to any fee payable under section eight thousand one of the civil practice law and rules.

6. (a) Unless within thirty days after a bill has been rendered to the employer by the nurse practitioner who has treated an injured employee, such employer shall have notified the chair and such nurse practitioner

in writing that such employer demands an impartial examination of the fairness of the amount claimed by such nurse practitioner for his or her services, the right to such an impartial examination shall be deemed to be waived and the amount claimed by such nurse practitioner shall be deemed to be the fair value of the services rendered. If the parties fail to agree as to the nurse practitioner healthcare services rendered under this chapter to a claimant, such value shall be decided by the nurse practitioner practice committee and the majority decision of such committee shall be conclusive upon the parties as to the value of the services rendered. The board may make an award for any such bill or part thereof which remains unpaid in the same manner as an award for bills rendered under subdivisions one and three of section thirteen-g of this article, and such award may be collected in like manner as an award of compensation. The chair shall assess the sum of fifty dollars against the employer for each such award made by the board, which sum shall be paid into the state treasury.

(b) Where a nurse practitioner's bill has been determined to be due and owing in accordance with the provisions of this section, the board may impose a penalty of not more than one and one-half percent interest per month payable to the licensed nurse practitioner in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the board.

(c) The parties to such proceeding shall each pay to the chair a sum equal to five per centum of the amount payable under the decision of such committee or a minimum of five dollars, whichever is greater. The sums so collected shall be transferred to the state treasury to reimburse it on account of the expense of administering this section.

7. Within the limits prescribed by the education law for certified nurse practitioner services, the report or testimony of an authorized nurse practitioner concerning the condition of an injured employee and treatment thereof shall be deemed competent evidence and the professional opinion of the nurse practitioner as to causal relation and as to required treatment shall be deemed competent but shall not be controlling. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to deprive any employer or insurance carrier of any right to a medical examination or presentation of medical testimony now conferred by law.

8. The chair shall promulgate rules governing the procedure to be followed by nurse practitioners rendering healthcare services under this section, which rules so far as practicable shall conform to the rules presently in effect with reference to medical care furnished to claimants in workers' compensation. In connection with the promulgation of such rules the chair may consult the nurse practitioner practice committee and may take into consideration the view of other interested parties.

9. The chair shall appoint for and with jurisdiction in the entire state of New York a single nurse practitioner practice committee composed of two certified nurse practitioners, and one duly licensed physician of the state of New York. Each member of such committee shall receive compensation either on an annual basis or on a per diem basis to be fixed by the chair within amounts appropriated therefor. One of such nurse practitioners shall be designated by the chair as a chair of such nurse practitioner practice committee. No member of such committee shall render healthcare services under this section nor be an employer or accept or participate in any fee from any insurance company authorized to write workers' compensation insurance in this state or from any self-insurer, whether such employment or fee relates to a workers' compen-

sation claim or otherwise. The attorney general, upon request, shall advise and assist such committee.

10. The nurse practitioner practice committee shall investigate, hear and make findings with respect to all charges as to professional or other misconduct of any authorized nurse practitioner as provided in this section under rules and procedures to be prescribed by the chair and shall report evidence of such misconduct, with their findings and recommendations with respect thereto, to the chair. The findings, decision and recommendation of such nurse practitioner practice committee shall be advisory to the chair only, and shall not be binding or conclusive upon him or her. The chair shall remove from the list of certified nurse practitioners authorized to render healthcare services under this chapter the name of any nurse practitioner who he or she shall find after reasonable investigation is disqualified because such nurse practitioner: (a) has been guilty of professional or other misconduct or incompetency in connection with the rendering of healthcare services, (b) has exceeded the limits of his or her professional competence in rendering healthcare services under the law, or has made false statements regarding qualifications in the application for authorization, (c) has failed to submit timely, full and truthful nurse practitioner healthcare services evaluation and treatment reports of all findings to the employer and directly to the chair of the board within the time limits provided in this section, (d) has rendered nurse practitioner services under this chapter for a fee less than that fixed in the fee schedule, (e) has solicited or has employed another to solicit for himself or herself or for another professional treatment, examination or care of an injured employee with any claim under this chapter, (f) has refused to appear before or answer upon request of the chair, board, nurse practitioner practice committee or any duly authorized officer of the state, any legal question or produce any relevant book or paper concerning conduct under an authorization granted under law, or (g) has directly or indirectly requested, received or participated in the division, transference, assignment, rebating, splitting or refunding of a fee for, or has directly or indirectly requested, received or profited by means of a credit or otherwise valuable consideration as a commission, discount or gratuity in connection with the treatment of a workers' compensation claimant.

11. Any person who violates or attempts to violate, and any person who aids another to violate or attempts to induce him or her to violate the provisions of paragraph (g) of subdivision ten of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

12. Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting in any respect the power or duty of the chair to investigate instances of misconduct, either before or after investigation by the nurse practitioner practice committee, or to temporarily suspend the authorization of any nurse practitioner believed to be guilty of such misconduct. The provisions of subdivision one of section thirteen-d of this article which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this section shall be applicable as if fully set forth in this section.

13. Nothing contained in this section shall prohibit nurse practitioners who practice as partners, in groups or as a professional corporation from pooling fees and moneys received, either by the partnership, professional corporation or group or by the individual members thereof, for professional services furnished by any individual professional member, or employee of such partnership, corporation or group, nor shall the professionals constituting the partnerships, corporations, or groups

be prohibited from sharing, dividing or apportioning the fees and moneys received by them or by the partnership, corporation or group in accordance with a partnership or other agreement.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made on or before such effective date.