



# Standing Committee Report Summary

## The Paramedical and Physiotherapy Central Councils Bill, 2007

- The Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (2007-08) submitted the 31st Report on 'The Paramedical and Physiotherapy Central Councils Bill, 2008' on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2008. The Chairperson of the Committee is Shri Amar Singh.
- The Committee suggested that the title of the Bill be changed to "The Allied Health Professions Central Councils Act, 2007." The use of such a term would not only cover all the disciplines currently being brought under the act but also leave the way open for the inclusion of other disciplines in the future.
- The bill currently includes occupational therapy within the discipline of physiotherapy. The Committee proposed that occupational therapy be treated as a separate discipline and to be defined as follows: "Occupational therapy means the application of purposeful goal-oriented activity through latest technology with computerized system and the like in the evaluation, diagnosis, and or treatment of persons whose function is impaired by physical illness or injury, emotional disorder, congenital or developmental disability, or the aging process, in order to, achieve optimum functioning, to prevent disability, and to maintain health."
- The Committee suggested that a separate council be set up for occupational therapists, who under the bill are to be registered with the physiotherapy central council. Given the need to treat occupational therapy as a discipline distinct from physiotherapy, it proposed changes to Clauses 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(g), and 2(1)(k).
- The Committee pointed out that the definition of physiotherapy was the most contentious issue. It proposed the alternate definition found in the Delhi Council for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Act, 1997 with some modifications. It also suggested that the following additional provision be added at an appropriate point in the bill: 'Physiotherapists cannot take over the responsibilities of a doctor and cannot prescribe drugs.'
- Currently the bill does not provide for elections to any of the councils. The Committee proposed elections to specific posts on each council and suggested that a specific provision be made in the Bill to the effect that after the term of the first Council constituted after the Bill becomes law (to be set at two years), the next council coming into existence will be an elected body (with a tenure of five years). An election procedure for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson should also be specified.
- The Committee recommended a new clause be added to the Bill to shield the proposed Councils from undue government interference.
- The Committee accepted the ministry's recommendation to include one member from the Rehabilitation Council of India. It suggested that two MPs from the Lok Sabha and one MP from the Rajya Sabha also be elected to be Councils by the respective Houses of Parliament.
- The Committee suggested that provision with respect to 'Professional Conduct', 'Renewal of Registration' and 'Rights and privileges of registered members' be included in the bill on a pattern similar to that of Indian Medical Councils Act, 1956 and the Delhi Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Act, 1997 with some modifications.
- The Committee called for the inclusion of provisions in the bill to ensure uniform standards of education across states and the establishment of state-level councils for the maintenance of such standards. It was not in favour of restricting the registration of professionals to the central level.

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