
HOUSE BILL 2291

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By Representatives Dellwo, Dyer, Ballasiotes, R. Johnson, Thibaudeau,
L. Johnson and Pruitt

Read first time 01/12/94. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to the certification of mental health counselors;
2 and amending RCW 18.19.120.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.19.120 and 1991 c 3 s 27 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) The department shall issue a certified mental health counselor
7 certificate to any applicant meeting the following requirements:

8 (a) ~~A master's or doctoral degree in mental health counseling ((or~~
9 ~~a related field from an approved school, or completion of at least~~
10 ~~thirty graduate semester hours or forty-five graduate quarter hours in~~
11 ~~the field of mental health counseling or the substantial equivalent in~~
12 ~~both subject content and extent of training;~~

13 ~~(b) Postgraduate supervised mental health counseling practice that~~
14 ~~meets standards established by the secretary;~~

15 ~~(c) Qualification by an examination, submission of all necessary~~
16 ~~documents, and payment of required fees; and~~

17 ~~(d) Twenty-four months of postgraduate professional experience~~
18 ~~working in a mental health counseling setting that meets the~~
19 ~~requirements established by the secretary.~~

1 ~~(2) No applicant may come before the secretary for examination~~
2 ~~without the initial educational and supervisory credentials as required~~
3 ~~by this chapter, except that applicants completing a master's or~~
4 ~~doctoral degree program in mental health counseling or a related field~~
5 ~~from an approved graduate school before or within eighteen months of~~
6 ~~July 26, 1987, may qualify for the examination.~~

7 ~~(3) For one year beginning on July 26, 1987, a person may apply for~~
8 ~~certification without examination. However, if the applicant's~~
9 ~~credentials are not adequate to establish competence to the secretary's~~
10 ~~satisfaction, the secretary may require an examination of the applicant~~
11 ~~during the initial certification period. For the initial certification~~
12 ~~period, an applicant shall:~~

13 ~~(a) Submit a completed application as required by the secretary,~~
14 ~~who may require that the statements on the application be made under~~
15 ~~oath, accompanied by the application fee set by the secretary in~~
16 ~~accordance with RCW 43.70.250;~~

17 ~~(b) Have a master's or doctoral degree in counseling or a related~~
18 ~~field from an approved school; and~~

19 ~~(c) Have submitted a completed application as required by the~~
20 ~~secretary accompanied by the application fee set by the secretary and~~
21 ~~a request for waiver from the requirements of (b) of this subsection,~~
22 ~~with documentation to show that the applicant has alternative training~~
23 ~~and experience equivalent to formal education and supervised experience~~
24 ~~required for certification.)) or a behavioral science master's or~~
25 ~~doctoral degree in a related field with the program equivalency as~~
26 ~~determined by rule by the department based on nationally recognized~~
27 ~~standards; and~~

28 ~~(b) Two years of postgraduate practice of counseling under the~~
29 ~~supervision of a qualified mental health counselor-supervisor or other~~
30 ~~mental health professional deemed appropriate by the secretary that may~~
31 ~~be accumulated concurrently with completion of the required program~~
32 ~~equivalency.~~

33 ~~(c) An individual meeting the requirements of this chapter shall be~~
34 ~~recognized as a health care provider within the definitions of this~~
35 ~~chapter.~~

36 ~~((+4)) (2) Certified mental health counseling practice is that~~
37 ~~aspect of counseling that involves the ((rendering to individuals,~~
38 ~~groups, organizations, corporations, institutions, government agencies,~~
39 ~~or the general public a mental health counseling service emphasizing a~~

1 ~~wellness model rather than an illness model in the application of~~
2 ~~therapeutic principles, methods, or procedures of mental health~~
3 ~~counseling to assist the client in achieving effective personal,~~
4 ~~organizational, institutional, social, educational, and vocational~~
5 ~~development and adjustment and to assist the client in achieving~~
6 ~~independence and autonomy in the helping relationship)) provision of~~
7 professional mental health counseling services to individuals, couples,
8 and families, singly or in groups, whether the services are offered
9 directly to the general public or through organizations, either public
10 or private, for a fee, monetary or otherwise. "Certified mental health
11 counseling" means the application of principles of human development,
12 learning theory, group dynamics, and etiology of mental illness and
13 dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families, groups, and
14 organizations, for the purpose of treating mental disorders and
15 promoting optimal mental health and functionality. Certified mental
16 health counseling also includes, but is not limited to, the assessment,
17 diagnosis, and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, educational
18 techniques developed to prevent such disorders, as well as the
19 application of a wellness model of mental health.

20 (3) The secretary shall establish rules governing mandatory
21 continuing education requirements for a certified mental health
22 counselor applying for renewal. The rules shall also establish
23 compliance monitoring and compliance shall be a prerequisite for
24 issuance of a renewal certificate.

25 (4) For a period of six years from the effective date of this act,
26 a mental health counselor certified as such by the department who has
27 not earned a minimum of a master's degree in mental health counseling
28 or a master's degree in behavioral science in a related field during
29 the prescribed six-year period, with the program equivalency as
30 determined by rule by the secretary, is not eligible for certification
31 or renewal of certification as a mental health counselor after the
32 prescribed six-year period.

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