
SENATE BILL 5053

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senator O'Ban

Prefiled 12/24/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing behavioral health workforce
2 participation by addressing certification and licensure requirements;
3 amending RCW 18.205.100 and 18.19.210; and creating a new section.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.205.100 and 2000 c 171 s 42 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 The secretary may establish by rule the standards and procedures
8 for approval of educational programs and alternative training. The
9 requirements for approved supervision towards certification must be
10 the same for all applicants in the regular or alternative training
11 pathways. The requirements for approved supervision towards
12 certification must allow approved supervision to be provided by a
13 licensed social worker or licensed mental health practitioner who has
14 at least one year of experience in the treatment of substance use
15 disorders or who has completed the alternative training requirements.
16 The secretary may utilize or contract with individuals or
17 organizations having expertise in the profession or in education to
18 assist in the evaluations. The secretary shall establish by rule the
19 standards and procedures for revocation of approval of educational
20 programs. The standards and procedures set shall apply equally to
21 educational programs and training in the United States and in foreign

1 jurisdictions. The secretary may establish a fee for educational
2 program evaluations.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.19.210 and 2013 c 338 s 6 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 (1)(a) An applicant for registration as an agency affiliated
6 counselor who applies to the department within seven days of
7 employment by an agency may work as an agency affiliated counselor
8 (~~for up to sixty days~~) while the application is processed. The
9 applicant must (~~stop working on the sixtieth day of employment if~~
10 ~~the registration has not been granted for any reason~~) provide
11 required documentation within reasonable time limits established by
12 the department, and if the applicant does not do so, the applicant
13 must stop working.

14 (b) The applicant may not provide unsupervised counseling prior
15 to completion of a criminal background check performed by either the
16 employer or the secretary. For purposes of this subsection,
17 "unsupervised" means the supervisor is not physically present at the
18 location where the counseling occurs.

19 (2) Agency affiliated counselors shall notify the department if
20 they are either no longer employed by the agency identified on their
21 application or are now employed with another agency, or both. Agency
22 affiliated counselors may not engage in the practice of counseling
23 unless they are currently affiliated with an agency.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department of health shall conduct a
25 sunrise review under chapter 18.120 RCW to evaluate the need for
26 creation of a bachelor's level behavioral health professional
27 credential which includes competencies related to the treatment of
28 both substance use and mental health disorders appropriate to the
29 bachelor's level of education, allows for reimbursement of services
30 in all appropriate settings where persons with behavioral health
31 disorders are treated, and is designed to facilitate work in
32 conjunction with master's level clinicians in a fashion which enables
33 all professionals to work at the top of their scope of license.

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