

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1802

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to certification of marriage and family therapists.

Brief Description: Modifying marriage and family therapist certification.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, Dellwo, Ballasiotes, Romero, Flemming, Lisk and Thibaudeau).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Health Care, March 2, 1993, DPS;
Passed House, March 12, 1993, 98-0;
Amended by Senate;
Passed Legislature, April 20, 1993, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Dellwo, Chair; L. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dyer, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Campbell; Conway; Cooke; Flemming; R. Johnson; Lisk; Mastin; Mielke; Morris; Thibaudeau; and Veloria.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Marriage and family therapists are counselors who are certified for practice by the Department of Health. The requirements for certification include:

1. A minimum of a master's degree in marriage and family therapy or its equivalent from a school approved by the secretary of the Department of Health that offers coursework in specified subjects;
2. Two years of postgraduate practice under the supervision of a qualified therapist; and
3. Passing scores on both a written and oral examinations.

The practice of marriage and family therapy is described as an assessment and treatment of impaired marriage or family relationships by the use of educational, sociological, and psychotherapeutic techniques.

Summary of Bill: Qualifications for licensure include a master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy, or in the alternative a degree in the behavioral sciences and program equivalency based on nationally recognized professional standards. The specification of subjects is repealed.

After receiving a master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy, two years of postgraduate practice under supervision is required. Or in the alternative, after receiving a degree in the behavioral sciences, two years of postgraduate practice in marriage and family therapy is required under the supervision of a qualified marriage and family therapist which can be accumulated concurrently with the program equivalency training.

The requirement for an oral examination is repealed. The written examination is to include knowledge of the practice law, including the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

The description of the practice of marriage and family therapy is clarified to include services to individuals directly or through public and private organizations for a fee or otherwise. It includes the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders within the context of the family.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The qualifications for certification of marriage and family therapists should be updated.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Bonita Hickman, Fred Wardenberg, and Ann Simons, Washington Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (pro); and Dee Spice, Professional Licensing, Department of Health (pro).