
Health Care Committee

SB 6658

Brief Description: Revising experience requirements for licensed mental health counselors.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows applicants for a license to practice mental health counseling to meet their supervised experience requirement under the supervision of a licensed mental health practitioner who is not a licensed mental health counselor.

Hearing Date: 2/21/06

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

In 2001, the enactment of ESSB 5877 (chapter 251, Laws of 2001) created three new professions: (1) licensed social workers, (2) licensed mental health counselors, and (3) licensed marriage and family therapists. All three of these professions are regulated by the Secretary of Health with the advice and assistance of the Washington State Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Social Workers Advisory Committee.

Licensing requirements for all three professions include specific education, examination, and supervised experience requirements. Applicants to become licensed social workers and licensed marriage and family therapists may meet the supervised experience requirement under either the supervision of another license holder of that profession or an "equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner." There is no similar allowance for applicants to become licensed mental health counselors to complete their experience under the supervision of an "equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner."

Summary of Bill:

Applicants for a license to practice mental health counseling may complete their supervised experience requirement under the supervision of a licensed mental health practitioner who is equally qualified to be a licensed mental health counselor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.