

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1349

C 12 L 19

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Clarifying the definition of a geriatric behavioral health worker for individuals with a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, behavioral health, or other related areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Cody, Jenkins, Doglio and Leavitt.

House Committee on Health Care & Wellness

Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care

Senate Committee on Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care

Background:

Nursing homes must maintain levels of direct care staff that are adequate to provide at least 3.4 hours of direct care per resident per day. Nursing homes may include geriatric behavioral health workers when calculating their minimum staffing requirements. "Geriatric behavioral health worker" is defined as a person who has received specialized training devoted to mental illness and treatment of older adults.

The Department of Social and Health Services must establish rules creating an exception allowing geriatric behavioral health workers to be recognized in the minimum staffing requirements as part of the direct care service delivery to individuals who have a behavioral health condition. To qualify for the exception, the geriatric behavioral health worker must have advanced practical knowledge in aging, disability, mental illness, Alzheimer's disease, and developmental disabilities, and: (1) have at least three years of experience caring for persons with chronic mental health issues, dementia, or intellectual and developmental disabilities in a long-term care or behavioral health setting; or (2) have successfully completed a facility-based behavioral health curriculum.

If a geriatric behavioral health worker holds less than a master's degree in social work, the worker must be directly supervised by an employee who has a master's degree in social work or a registered nurse.

The recognition of hours worked by geriatric behavioral health workers counting toward minimum staffing requirements is limited to total hours as adjusted by the proportion of resident days of clients at the nursing home with a behavioral health condition.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary:

To qualify for the exception allowing a geriatric behavioral health worker to be recognized in the minimum staffing requirements as part of the direct care service delivery to individuals who have a behavioral health condition, the worker must:

- have a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, behavioral health, or other related area; or
- have at least three years of experience caring for persons with chronic mental health issues, dementia, or intellectual and developmental disabilities in a long-term care or behavioral health setting; or
- have successfully completed a facility-based behavioral health curriculum.

"Geriatric behavioral health worker" is defined as a person with a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, behavioral health, or other related areas, or a person who has received specialized training devoted to mental illness and treatment of older adults.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	95	0
Senate	45	0

Effective: July 28, 2019