

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5054

PARTIAL VETO C 351 L 19 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing the behavioral health workforce by establishing a reciprocity program to increase the portability of behavioral health licenses and certifications.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Brown, Conway, Wilson, L., Zeiger, Short, Van De Wege and Wagoner.

Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care
House Committee on Health Care & Wellness
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Department of Health (DOH) regulates the practice of chemical dependency professionals, mental health counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. To obtain a license or certification, DOH requires the applicant to meet certain educational and experience qualifications, including holding the appropriate level degree, completing relevant coursework, completing supervised experience hours, and passing a jurisprudential examination. For applicants holding an out-of-state license or certification, DOH conducts a substantial equivalence review to determine if the professional's out-of-state license or certification required sufficiently similar education, experience, and examination requirements to qualify them for licensure in Washington.

Summary: DOH must establish a reciprocity program for psychologists, chemical dependency professionals, mental health counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. DOH must issue a probationary license or certification to any individual who holds, or has held within the past twelve months, a license or certification in good standing from another state or territory of the United States that has a substantially equivalent or greater scope of practice to the corresponding Washington state license or certification, and has no disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history.

Following the issuance of the probationary license or certification, DOH must determine if any training or education deficiencies exist between the foreign license requirements and Washington State requirements. If a deficiency in the applicant's background exists, DOH must determine whether, considering the experience and capabilities of the applicant, additional training or education is necessary to maintain the probationary license or certification and within a reasonable time transition to full licensure or certification. DOH

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.

may place a reasonable time limit on a probationary license or certification and require an applicant to pass a jurisprudential exam when appropriate.

DOH must maintain and publish a list of states and territories that it has determined have an equivalent or greater scope of practice, training, and education requirements to the corresponding Washington license or certification. DOH must also explore options for adoption of interstate compacts supporting license portability for psychologists, chemical dependency professionals, mental health counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. Individuals holding a probationary license may only work in a licensed or certified behavioral health service provider.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	95	1	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019

Partial Veto Summary:

- Removed sections directing the Department of Health to conduct studies to explore options for adopting interstate compacts supporting license portability for psychologists, chemical dependency professionals, social workers, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists.