

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1063

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long Term Care, March 10, 2021
Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care, March 19, 2021

Title: An act relating to allowing additional renewals for behavioral health professional trainee and associate credentials.

Brief Description: Allowing additional renewals for behavioral health professional trainee and associate credentials.

Sponsors: Representatives Harris, Cody, Bateman, Kloba, Ortiz-Self, Leavitt, Slatter, Tharinger, Callan, Riccelli, Macri, Rule, Davis and Pollet.

Brief History: Passed House: 1/29/21, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 3/10/21 [w/oRec-BH].

Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care: 3/12/21, 3/19/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the Department of Health to renew associate licenses or trainee certifications for certain behavioral health professionals in training additional times, due to barriers to testing or training resulting from a Governor-declared emergency.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE TO HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Dhingra, Chair; Wagoner, Ranking Member; Frockt, Nobles and Warnick.

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

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

Background: The Department of Health (DOH) issues trainee certifications and associate licenses for certain behavioral health professions. These allow trainees or associates limited practice authority under the supervision of a fully certified or licensed professional while they accumulate the practical and educational experience necessary to meet full professional certification or licensure requirements.

Substance Use Disorder Professional Trainees. A substance use disorder professional trainee (SUDPT) is an individual working to satisfy the requirements for full certification as a substance use disorder professional. The experience hours required for substance use disorder professional certification must be carried out under supervision of an approved professional. The number of experience hours needed for certification as a substance use disorder professional varies, depending on the type of formative education of the trainee. To qualify for certification as an SUDPT, the person must:

- demonstrate enrollment in an approved school where the person is gaining the experience required to receive a substance use disorder professional credential;
- submit evidence of completion of four hours of acquired immune deficiency syndrome education; and
- submit a signed declaration which states the person is obtaining the experience requirements for a substance use disorder professional credential.

An SUDPT certification may be renewed no more than four times.

Associate Licenses. An associate license is available to a person gaining the supervised experience necessary to become a:

- licensed independent clinical social worker;
- licensed advanced social worker;
- licensed mental health counselor; or
- licensed marriage and family therapist.

The number of obligatory experience hours and other requirements varies, depending upon the specific behavioral health license sought. An associate license may be renewed no more than six times, provided the applicant for renewal has successfully completed 18 hours of continuing education in the preceding year. Upon the second renewal, at least six of the continuing education hours in the preceding two years must be in professional ethics.

Governor-Declared Emergencies. A Governor's proclamation of a state of emergency is effective upon the Governor's signature, after the appropriate filing and public notice procedure. A proclamation of a state of emergency allows the Governor to prescribe certain actions or prohibitions, such as setting a curfew period or prohibiting persons gathering in public or private areas. The Governor may terminate a state of emergency proclamation when order has been restored in the area affected. In early February 2020, the Governor issued several emergency proclamations affecting 25 counties relating to the state response to flooding and winter weather conditions. Beginning on February 29, 2020, the Governor issued a series of emergency proclamations and extensions of emergency proclamations

related to COVID-19, some of which are ongoing over a year later.

Summary of Bill: DOH may renew the certification of a substance use disorder trainee more than four times, or the associate license of a advanced social worker associate, independent clinical social worker associate, mental health counselor associate, or marriage and family therapist associate more than six times, if it finds that renewal is justified due to barriers to testing or training resulting from a Governor-declared emergency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This legislation is directly in line with recommendations issued by the State Workforce Board in its recent behavioral health workforce assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided challenges for the behavioral health profession, including barriers for some clinicians in obtaining supervised practice hours. This bill will help to retain valuable workers when their services are in high demand.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Julia O'Connor, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.