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**HOUSE BILL 2040**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Callan, Eslick, Macri, Simmons, Duerr, and Harris-Talley

Read first time 01/19/22. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to streamlining licensing requirements for  
2 certain behavioral health professionals; amending RCW 18.225.090;  
3 creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that Washington  
6 state is in the midst of a behavioral health crisis. Unmet demand for  
7 behavioral health services is leading to negative impacts on the  
8 health and well-being of many Washingtonians. One of the many causes  
9 of this unmet demand is the inadequate number of mental health  
10 professionals available to treat Washington residents with behavioral  
11 health needs.

12 (2) The legislature acknowledges the ongoing efforts by state  
13 agencies and stakeholders to streamline the licensing processes for  
14 certain behavioral health professionals. These efforts have, however,  
15 not yielded any meaningful increase in the number of such  
16 professionals.

17 (3) The legislature therefore intends to take action to  
18 streamline the licensing process for these professionals by reducing  
19 the number of hours of supervised experience required for full  
20 licensure, beginning July 1, 2024. The legislature intends to revisit  
21 this approach in light of any recommendations resulting from the

1 ongoing work of state agencies and stakeholders if those  
2 recommendations are reported to the legislature prior to the 2024  
3 regular legislative session.

4 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.225.090 and 2021 c 21 s 1 are each amended to  
5 read as follows:

6 (1) The secretary shall issue a license to any applicant who  
7 demonstrates to the satisfaction of the secretary that the applicant  
8 meets the following education and experience requirements for the  
9 applicant's practice area.

10 (a) Licensed social work classifications:

11 (i) Licensed advanced social worker:

12 (A) Graduation from a master's or doctorate social work  
13 educational program accredited by the council on social work  
14 education and approved by the secretary based upon nationally  
15 recognized standards;

16 (B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

17 (C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement.

18 The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of  
19 (~~three thousand two hundred~~) 1,600 hours with supervision by an  
20 approved supervisor who has been licensed for at least two years. Of  
21 those supervised hours:

22 (I) At least (~~ninety~~) 45 hours must include direct supervision  
23 as specified in this subsection by a licensed independent clinical  
24 social worker, a licensed advanced social worker, or an equally  
25 qualified licensed mental health professional. Of those hours of  
26 directly supervised experience:

27 (1) At least (~~fifty~~) 25 hours must include supervision by a  
28 licensed advanced social worker or licensed independent clinical  
29 social worker; the other (~~forty~~) 20 hours may be supervised by an  
30 equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and

31 (2) At least (~~forty~~) 20 hours must be in one-to-one supervision  
32 and (~~fifty~~) 25 hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group  
33 supervision; and

34 (II) (~~Eight~~) Four hundred hours must be in direct client  
35 contact; and

36 (D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of  
37 (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

38 (ii) Licensed independent clinical social worker:

1 (A) Graduation from a master's or doctorate level social work  
2 educational program accredited by the council on social work  
3 education and approved by the secretary based upon nationally  
4 recognized standards;

5 (B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

6 (C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement.  
7 The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of (~~four~~  
8 ~~thousand~~) 2,000 hours of experience, over a period of not less than  
9 three years, with supervision by an approved supervisor who has been  
10 licensed for at least two years and, as specified in this subsection,  
11 may be either a licensed independent clinical social worker who has  
12 had at least one year of experience in supervising the clinical  
13 social work of others or an equally qualified licensed mental health  
14 practitioner. Of those supervised hours:

15 (I) At least (~~one thousand~~) 500 hours must be direct client  
16 contact; and

17 (II) Hours of direct supervision must include:

18 (1) At least (~~one hundred thirty~~) 65 hours by a licensed mental  
19 health practitioner;

20 (2) At least (~~seventy~~) 35 hours of supervision with a licensed  
21 independent clinical social worker meeting the qualifications under  
22 this subsection (1)(a)(ii)(C); the other (~~sixty~~) 30 hours may be  
23 supervised by an equally qualified licensed mental health  
24 practitioner; and

25 (3) At least (~~sixty~~) 30 hours must be in one-to-one supervision  
26 and (~~seventy~~) 35 hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group  
27 supervision; and

28 (D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of  
29 (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

30 (b) Licensed mental health counselor:

31 (i) Graduation from a master's or doctoral level educational  
32 program in mental health counseling or a related discipline from a  
33 college or university approved by the secretary based upon nationally  
34 recognized standards;

35 (ii) Successful completion of an approved examination;

36 (iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience  
37 requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of  
38 (~~thirty-six~~) 18 months full-time counseling or (~~three thousand~~)  
39 1,500 hours of postgraduate mental health counseling under the  
40 supervision of a qualified licensed mental health counselor or

1 equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner, in an approved  
2 setting. The (~~three thousand~~) 1,500 hours of required experience  
3 includes a minimum of (~~one hundred~~) 50 hours spent in immediate  
4 supervision with the qualified licensed mental health counselor, and  
5 includes a minimum of (~~one thousand two hundred~~) 600 hours of  
6 direct counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups; and

7 (iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements  
8 of (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

9 (c) Licensed marriage and family therapist:

10 (i) Graduation from a master's degree or doctoral degree  
11 educational program in marriage and family therapy or graduation from  
12 an educational program in an allied field equivalent to a master's  
13 degree or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy approved by  
14 the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

15 (ii) Successful passage of an approved examination;

16 (iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience  
17 requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of  
18 (~~two~~) one calendar year(~~s~~) of full-time marriage and family  
19 therapy. Of the total supervision, (~~one hundred~~) 50 hours must be  
20 with a licensed marriage and family therapist with at least five  
21 years' clinical experience; the other (~~one hundred~~) 50 hours may be  
22 with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. Total  
23 experience requirements include:

24 (A) A minimum of (~~three thousand~~) 1,500 hours of experience,  
25 (~~one thousand~~) 500 hours of which must be direct client contact; at  
26 least (~~five hundred~~) 250 hours must be gained in diagnosing and  
27 treating couples and families; plus

28 (B) At least (~~two hundred~~) 100 hours of qualified supervision  
29 with a supervisor. At least (~~one hundred~~) 50 of the (~~two hundred~~)  
30 100 hours must be one-on-one supervision, and the remaining hours may  
31 be in one-on-one or group supervision.

32 Applicants who have completed a master's program accredited by  
33 the commission on accreditation for marriage and family therapy  
34 education of the American association for marriage and family therapy  
35 may be credited with (~~five hundred~~) 250 hours of direct client  
36 contact and (~~one hundred~~) 50 hours of formal meetings with an  
37 approved supervisor; and

38 (iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements  
39 of (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

1           (2) The department shall establish by rule what constitutes  
2 adequate proof of meeting the criteria. Only rules in effect on the  
3 date of submission of a completed application of an associate for her  
4 or his license shall apply. If the rules change after a completed  
5 application is submitted but before a license is issued, the new  
6 rules shall not be reason to deny the application.

7           (3) In addition, applicants shall be subject to the grounds for  
8 denial of a license or issuance of a conditional license under  
9 chapter 18.130 RCW.

10           NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 3.** Section 2 of this act takes effect July 1,  
11 2024.

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