

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT  
**SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5555**

68th Legislature  
2023 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate April 18, 2023  
Yeas 29 Nays 19

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**President of the Senate**

Passed by the House April 12, 2023  
Yeas 63 Nays 34

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**Speaker of the House of  
Representatives**

Approved

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**Governor of the State of Washington**

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5555** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

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**Secretary**

FILED

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5555**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2023 Regular Session

**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Keiser, Nguyen, Nobles, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/24/23.

1       AN ACT Relating to addressing the behavioral health workforce  
2 shortage and expanding access to peer services by creating the  
3 profession of certified peer specialists; amending RCW 18.130.040,  
4 18.130.040, 18.130.175, 43.43.842, and 43.70.250; adding new sections  
5 to chapter 71.24 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.43 RCW;  
6 adding a new chapter to Title 18 RCW; creating a new section;  
7 providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

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

9       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.**   (1) The legislature finds that peers play  
10 a critical role along the behavioral health continuum of care, from  
11 outreach to treatment to recovery support. Peers deal in the currency  
12 of hope and motivation and are incredibly adept at supporting people  
13 with behavioral health challenges on their recovery journeys. Peers  
14 represent the only segment of the behavioral health workforce where  
15 there is not a shortage, but a surplus of willing workers. Peers,  
16 however, are presently limited to serving only medicaid recipients  
17 and working only in community behavioral health agencies. As a  
18 result, youth and adults with commercial insurance have no access to  
19 peer services. Furthermore, peers who work in other settings, such as  
20 emergency departments and behavioral health urgent care, cannot bill  
21 insurance for their services.

1 (2) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to address the  
2 behavioral health workforce crisis, expand access to peer services,  
3 eliminate financial barriers to professional licensing, and honor the  
4 contributions of the peer profession by creating the profession of  
5 certified peer specialists.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
7 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
8 otherwise.

9 (1) "Advisory committee" means the Washington state certified  
10 peer specialist advisory committee established under section 4 of  
11 this act.

12 (2) "Approved supervisor" means:

13 (a) Until July 1, 2028, a behavioral health provider, as defined  
14 in RCW 71.24.025 with at least two years of experience working in a  
15 behavioral health practice that employs peer specialists as part of  
16 treatment teams; or

17 (b) A certified peer specialist who has completed:

18 (i) At least 1,500 hours of work as a fully certified peer  
19 specialist engaged in the practice of peer support services, with at  
20 least 500 hours attained through the joint supervision of peers in  
21 conjunction with another approved supervisor; and

22 (ii) The training developed by the health care authority under  
23 section 13 of this act.

24 (3) "Certified peer specialist" means a person certified under  
25 this chapter to engage in the practice of peer support services.

26 (4) "Certified peer specialist trainee" means an individual  
27 working toward the supervised experience and written examination  
28 requirements to become a certified peer specialist under this  
29 chapter.

30 (5) "Department" means the department of health.

31 (6) "Practice of peer support services" means the provision of  
32 interventions by either a person in recovery from a mental health  
33 condition or substance use disorder, or both, or the parent or legal  
34 guardian of a youth who is receiving or has received behavioral  
35 health services. The client receiving the interventions receives them  
36 from a person with a similar lived experience as either a person in  
37 recovery from a mental health condition or substance use disorder, or  
38 both, or the parent or legal guardian of a youth who is receiving or  
39 has received behavioral health services. The person provides the

1 interventions through the use of shared experiences to assist a  
2 client in the acquisition and exercise of skills needed to support  
3 the client's recovery. Interventions may include activities that  
4 assist clients in accessing or engaging in treatment and in symptom  
5 management; promote social connection, recovery, and self-advocacy;  
6 provide guidance in the development of natural community supports and  
7 basic daily living skills; and support clients in engagement,  
8 motivation, and maintenance related to achieving and maintaining  
9 health and wellness goals.

10 (7) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** In addition to any other authority, the  
12 secretary has the authority to:

13 (1) Adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW necessary to implement  
14 this chapter;

15 (2) Establish all certification, examination, and renewal fees  
16 for certified peer specialists in accordance with RCW 43.70.110 and  
17 43.70.250;

18 (3) Establish forms and procedures necessary to administer this  
19 chapter;

20 (4) Issue certificates to applicants who have met the education,  
21 training, and examination requirements for obtaining a certificate  
22 and to deny a certificate to applicants who do not meet the  
23 requirements;

24 (5) Coordinate with the health care authority to confirm an  
25 applicants' successful completion of the certified peer specialist  
26 education course offered by the health care authority under section  
27 13 of this act and successful passage of the associated oral  
28 examination as proof of eligibility to take a qualifying written  
29 examination for applicants for obtaining a certificate;

30 (6) Establish practice parameters consistent with the definition  
31 of the practice of peer support services;

32 (7) Provide staffing and administrative support to the advisory  
33 committee;

34 (8) Determine which states have credentialing requirements  
35 equivalent to those of this state, and issue certificates to  
36 applicants credentialed in those states without examination;

37 (9) Define and approve any supervised experience requirements for  
38 certification;

1 (10) Assist the advisory committee with the review of peer  
2 counselor apprenticeship program applications in the process of being  
3 approved and registered under chapter 49.04 RCW;

4 (11) Adopt rules implementing a continuing competency program;  
5 and

6 (12) Establish by rule the procedures for an appeal of an  
7 examination failure.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The Washington state certified peer  
9 specialist advisory committee is established.

10 (2)(a) The advisory committee shall consist of 11 members. Nine  
11 members must be certified peer specialists. Those nine members shall  
12 be inclusive of mental health peers, substance use disorder peers,  
13 community-based peers, peers who work in clinical settings, youth  
14 peers, adult peers, parent or family peers, and peer supervisors. One  
15 member must represent community behavioral health agencies. One  
16 member must represent the public at large and may not be a  
17 credentialed behavioral health provider. The advisory committee shall  
18 be reflective of the community who receives peer services, including  
19 people who are Black, indigenous, people of color, and individuals  
20 who identify as LGBTQ. All members of the advisory committee must be  
21 residents of Washington state. Members may not hold an office in a  
22 professional association for peer specialists or be employed by the  
23 state. A majority of the members currently serving shall constitute a  
24 quorum.

25 (b) The members shall be appointed by the secretary to serve  
26 three-year terms which may be renewed. Initial members shall be  
27 appointed to staggered terms which may be less than three years.  
28 Initial membership may vary from the requirements in (a) of this  
29 subsection to account for the lack of an available credential for  
30 certified peer specialists at the time the advisory committee is  
31 established. The advisory committee shall select a chair and vice  
32 chair.

33 (3) The department and the health care authority, as appropriate,  
34 are encouraged to adopt recommendations as submitted by the advisory  
35 committee on topics related to the administration of this chapter and  
36 provide their rationale for any formal recommendations of the  
37 advisory committee that either agency does not adopt, including:

38 (a) Advice and recommendations regarding the establishment or  
39 implementation of rules related to this chapter;

1 (b) Advice, recommendations, and consultation regarding  
2 professional boundaries, customary practices, and other aspects of  
3 peer support as it relates to complaints, investigations, and other  
4 disciplinary actions;

5 (c) Assistance and recommendations to enhance patient and client  
6 education;

7 (d) Assistance and recommendations regarding the written and oral  
8 examination to become a certified peer specialist and the examiners  
9 conducting the examinations, including recommendations to assure that  
10 the examinations, and the manner in which the examinations are  
11 administered, are culturally appropriate;

12 (e) Assistance and recommendations regarding any continuing  
13 education and continuing competency programs administered under the  
14 provisions of this chapter;

15 (f) Advice and guidance regarding criteria for certification  
16 based on prior experience as a peer specialist attained before July  
17 1, 2025, as described in section 7(2) of this act;

18 (g) Recommendations for additional supports that may help those  
19 practicing as peer counselors as of the effective date of this  
20 section to become certified peer specialists;

21 (h) Advice and guidance on the feasibility and design of a two-  
22 phase certification program for peer specialists;

23 (i) Review of existing health care authority policies and  
24 procedures related to peer counselors;

25 (j) Advice on approving additional education and training  
26 entities, other than the health care authority, to conduct the course  
27 of instruction in section 13(1)(a) of this act to expand availability  
28 of the course, particularly among black, indigenous, people of color,  
29 and individuals who identify as LGBTQ;

30 (k) Advice on approving additional testing entities, other than  
31 the health care authority to administer the written and oral  
32 examination, including entities owned by black, indigenous, and  
33 people of color;

34 (l) Advice on long-term planning and growth for the future  
35 advancement of the peer specialist profession;

36 (m) Recommendations on recruitment and retention in the peer  
37 specialist profession, including among black, indigenous, people of  
38 color, and individuals who identify as LGBTQ; and

39 (n) Recommendations on strategies to eliminate financial barriers  
40 to licensing as a certified peer specialist.

1 (4) Committee members are immune from suit in an action, civil or  
2 criminal, based on the department's disciplinary proceedings or other  
3 official acts performed in good faith.

4 (5) Committee members shall be compensated in accordance with RCW  
5 43.03.240, including travel expenses in carrying out his or her  
6 authorized duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Beginning July 1, 2025, except as provided  
8 in section 13 of this act, the decision of a person practicing peer  
9 support services to become certified under this chapter is voluntary.  
10 A person may not use the title certified peer specialist unless the  
11 person holds a credential under this chapter.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Nothing in this chapter may be construed  
13 to prohibit or restrict:

14 (1) An individual who holds a credential issued by this state,  
15 other than as a certified peer specialist or certified peer  
16 specialist trainee, to engage in the practice of an occupation or  
17 profession without obtaining an additional credential from the state.  
18 The individual may not use the title certified peer specialist unless  
19 the individual holds a credential under this chapter; or

20 (2) The practice of peer support services by a person who is  
21 employed by the government of the United States while engaged in the  
22 performance of duties prescribed by the laws of the United States.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) Beginning July 1, 2025, except as  
24 provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, the secretary  
25 shall issue a certificate to practice as a certified peer specialist  
26 to any applicant who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the  
27 secretary that the applicant meets the following requirements:

28 (a) Submission of an attestation to the department that the  
29 applicant self-identifies as:

30 (i) A person with one or more years of recovery from a mental  
31 health condition, substance use disorder, or both; or

32 (ii) The parent or legal guardian of a youth who is receiving or  
33 has received behavioral health services;

34 (b) Successful completion of the education course developed and  
35 offered by the health care authority under section 13 of this act;

1 (c) Successful passage of an oral examination administered by the  
2 health care authority upon completion of the education course offered  
3 by the health care authority under section 13 of this act;

4 (d) Successful passage of a written examination administered by  
5 the health care authority upon completion of the education course  
6 offered by the health care authority under section 13 of this act;

7 (e) Successful completion of an experience requirement of at  
8 least 1,000 supervised hours as a certified peer specialist trainee  
9 engaged in the volunteer or paid practice of peer support services,  
10 in accordance with the standards in section 8 of this act; and

11 (f) Payment of the appropriate fee required under this chapter.

12 (2) The secretary, with the recommendation of the advisory  
13 committee, shall establish criteria for the issuance of a certificate  
14 to engage in the practice of peer support services based on prior  
15 experience as a peer specialist attained before July 1, 2025. The  
16 criteria shall establish equivalency standards necessary to be deemed  
17 to have met the requirements of subsection (1) of this section. An  
18 applicant under this subsection shall have until July 1, 2026, to  
19 complete any standards in which the applicant is determined to be  
20 deficient.

21 (3) The secretary, with the recommendation of the advisory  
22 committee, shall issue a certificate to engage in the practice of  
23 peer support services based on completion of an apprenticeship  
24 program registered and approved under chapter 49.04 RCW and reviewed  
25 by the advisory committee under section 3 of this act.

26 (4) A certificate to engage in the practice of peer support  
27 services is valid for two years. A certificate may be renewed upon  
28 demonstrating to the department that the certified peer specialist  
29 has successfully completed 30 hours of continuing education approved  
30 by the department. As part of the continuing education requirement,  
31 every six years the applicant must submit proof of successful  
32 completion of at least three hours of suicide prevention training and  
33 at least six hours of coursework in professional ethics and law,  
34 which may include topics under RCW 18.130.180.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) Beginning July 1, 2025, the secretary  
36 shall issue a certificate to practice as a certified peer specialist  
37 trainee to any applicant who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the  
38 secretary that:



1 (a) The applicant meets the requirements of section 7 (1)(a),  
2 (b), (c), (d), and (4) of this act and is working toward the  
3 supervised experience requirements to become a certified peer  
4 specialist under this chapter; or

5 (b) The applicant is enrolled in an apprenticeship program  
6 registered and approved under chapter 49.04 RCW and approved by the  
7 secretary under section 3 of this act.

8 (2) An applicant seeking to become a certified peer specialist  
9 trainee under this section shall submit to the secretary for approval  
10 an attestation, in accordance with rules adopted by the department,  
11 that the certified peer specialist trainee is actively pursuing the  
12 supervised experience requirements of section 7(1)(d) of this act.  
13 This attestation must be updated with the trainee's annual renewal.

14 (3) A certified peer specialist trainee certified under this  
15 section may practice only under the supervision of an approved  
16 supervisor. Supervision may be provided through distance supervision.  
17 Supervision may be provided by an approved supervisor who is employed  
18 by the same employer that employs the certified peer specialist  
19 trainee or by an arrangement made with a third-party approved  
20 supervisor to provide supervision, or a combination of both types of  
21 approved supervisors.

22 (4) A certified peer specialist trainee certificate is valid for  
23 one year and may only be renewed four times.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** (1) The date and location of written  
25 examinations must be established by the health care authority.  
26 Applicants who have been found by the health care authority to meet  
27 other requirements for obtaining a certificate must be scheduled for  
28 the next examination following the filing of the application. The  
29 health care authority shall establish by rule the examination  
30 application deadline.

31 (2) The health care authority shall administer written  
32 examinations to each applicant, by means determined most effective,  
33 on subjects appropriate to the scope of practice, as applicable. The  
34 examinations must be limited to the purpose of determining whether  
35 the applicant possesses the minimum skill and knowledge necessary to  
36 practice competently.

37 (3) The examination materials, all grading of the materials, and  
38 the grading of any practical work must be preserved for a period of  
39 not less than one year after the health care authority has made and

1 published the decisions. All examinations must be conducted under  
2 fair and wholly impartial methods.

3 (4) Any applicant failing to make the required grade in the first  
4 written examination may take up to three subsequent written  
5 examinations as the applicant desires upon prepaying a fee determined  
6 by the health care authority for each subsequent written examination.  
7 Upon failing four written examinations, the health care authority may  
8 invalidate the original application and require remedial education  
9 before the person may take future written examinations.

10 (5) The health care authority may approve a written examination  
11 prepared or administered by a private organization that credentials  
12 and renews credentials for peer counselors, or an association of  
13 credentialing agencies, for use by an applicant in meeting the  
14 credentialing requirements.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** The secretary shall establish, by rule,  
16 the requirements and fees for renewal of a certificate issued  
17 pursuant to this chapter. Fees must be established in accordance with  
18 RCW 43.70.110 and 43.70.250. Failure to renew the certificate  
19 invalidates the certificate and all privileges granted by the  
20 certificate. If a certificate has lapsed for a period longer than  
21 three years, the person shall demonstrate competence to the  
22 satisfaction of the secretary by completing continuing competency  
23 requirements or meeting other standards determined by the secretary.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** (1) The department, in consultation with  
25 the advisory committee, shall conduct an assessment and submit a  
26 report to the governor and the committees of the legislature with  
27 jurisdiction over health policy issues by December 1, 2027.

28 (2) The report in subsection (1) of this section shall provide:

29 (a) An analysis of the adequacy of the supply of certified peer  
30 specialists serving as approved supervisors pursuant to section  
31 2(2)(b) of this act with respect to the ability to meet the  
32 anticipated supervision needs of certified peer specialist trainees  
33 upon the expiration of behavioral health providers serving as  
34 approved supervisors pursuant to section 2(2)(a) of this act;

35 (b) An assessment of whether or not it is necessary to extend the  
36 expiration of behavioral health providers serving as approved  
37 supervisors pursuant to section 2(2)(a) of this act in order to meet

1 the anticipated supervision needs of certified peer specialist  
2 trainees;

3 (c) Recommendations for increasing the supply of certified peer  
4 specialists serving as approved supervisors pursuant to section  
5 2(2)(b) of this act, including any potential modifications to the  
6 requirements to become an approved supervisor; and

7 (d) Recommendations for alternative methods of providing  
8 supervision to certified peer specialist trainees, including options  
9 for team-based supervision that incorporate supervision from both  
10 behavioral health providers serving as approved supervisors pursuant  
11 to section 2(2)(a) of this act and certified peer specialists serving  
12 as approved supervisors pursuant to section 2(2)(b) of this act.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** The uniform disciplinary act, chapter  
14 18.130 RCW, governs uncertified practice of peer support services,  
15 the issuance and denial of certificates, and the discipline of  
16 certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist trainees  
17 under this chapter.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24  
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1)(a) By January 1, 2025, the authority must develop a course of  
21 instruction to become a certified peer specialist under chapter  
22 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 22 of this act). The  
23 course must be approximately 80 hours in duration and based upon the  
24 curriculum offered by the authority in its peer counselor training as  
25 of the effective date of this section, as well as additional  
26 instruction in the principles of recovery coaching and suicide  
27 prevention. The authority shall establish a peer engagement process  
28 to receive suggestions regarding subjects to be covered in the 80-  
29 hour curriculum beyond those addressed in the peer counselor training  
30 curriculum and recovery coaching and suicide prevention curricula,  
31 including the cultural appropriateness of the 80-hour training. The  
32 education course must be taught by certified peer specialists. The  
33 education course must be offered by the authority with sufficient  
34 frequency to accommodate the demand for training and the needs of the  
35 workforce. The authority must establish multiple configurations for  
36 offering the education course, including offering the course as an  
37 uninterrupted course with longer class hours held on consecutive days  
38 for students seeking accelerated completion of the course and as an

1 extended course with reduced daily class hours, possibly with  
2 multiple days between classes, to accommodate students with other  
3 commitments. Upon completion of the education course, the student  
4 must pass an oral examination administered by the course trainer.

5 (b) The authority shall develop an expedited course of  
6 instruction that consists of only those portions of the curriculum  
7 required under (a) of this subsection that exceed the authority's  
8 certified peer counselor training curriculum as it exists on the  
9 effective date of this section. The expedited training shall focus on  
10 assisting persons who completed the authority's certified peer  
11 counselor training as it exists on the effective date of this section  
12 to meet the education requirements for certification under section 7  
13 of this act.

14 (2) By January 1, 2025, the authority must develop a training  
15 course for certified peer specialists providing supervision to  
16 certified peer specialist trainees under section 8 of this act.

17 (3)(a) By July 1, 2025, the authority shall offer a 40-hour  
18 specialized training course in peer crisis response services for  
19 individuals employed as peers who work with individuals who may be  
20 experiencing a behavioral health crisis. When offering the training  
21 course, priority for enrollment must be given to certified peer  
22 specialists employed in a crisis-related setting, including entities  
23 identified in (b) of this subsection. The training shall incorporate  
24 best practices for responding to 988 behavioral health crisis line  
25 calls, as well as processes for co-response with law enforcement when  
26 necessary.

27 (b) Beginning July 1, 2025, any entity that uses certified peer  
28 specialists as peer crisis responders, may only use certified peer  
29 specialists who have completed the training course established by (a)  
30 of this subsection. A behavioral health agency that uses certified  
31 peer specialists to work as peer crisis responders must maintain the  
32 records of the completion of the training course for those certified  
33 peer specialists who provide these services and make the records  
34 available to the state agency for auditing or certification purposes.

35 (4) By July 1, 2025, the authority shall offer a course designed  
36 to inform licensed or certified behavioral health agencies of the  
37 benefits of incorporating certified peer specialists and certified  
38 peer specialist trainees into their clinical staff and best practices  
39 for incorporating their services. The authority shall encourage  
40 entities that hire certified peer specialists and certified peer

1 specialist trainees, including licensed or certified behavioral  
2 health agencies, hospitals, primary care offices, and other entities,  
3 to have appropriate staff attend the training by making it available  
4 in multiple formats.

5 (5) The authority shall:

6 (a) Hire clerical, administrative, investigative, and other staff  
7 as needed to implement this section to serve as examiners for any  
8 practical oral or written examination and assure that the examiners  
9 are trained to administer examinations in a culturally appropriate  
10 manner and represent the diversity of applicants being tested. The  
11 authority shall adopt procedures to allow for appropriate  
12 accommodations for persons with a learning disability, other  
13 disabilities, and other needs and assure that staff involved in the  
14 administration of examinations are trained on those procedures;

15 (b) Develop oral and written examinations required under this  
16 section. The initial examinations shall be adapted from those used by  
17 the authority as of the effective date of this section and modified  
18 pursuant to input and comments from the Washington state peer  
19 specialist advisory committee. The authority shall assure that the  
20 examinations are culturally appropriate;

21 (c) Prepare, grade, and administer, or supervise the grading and  
22 administration of written examinations for obtaining a certificate;

23 (d) Approve entities to provide the educational courses required  
24 by this section and approve entities to prepare, grade, and  
25 administer written examinations for the educational courses required  
26 by this section. In establishing approval criteria, the authority  
27 shall consider the recommendations of the Washington state peer  
28 specialist advisory committee;

29 (e) Develop examination preparation materials and make them  
30 available to students enrolled in the courses established under this  
31 section in multiple formats, including specialized examination  
32 preparation support for students with higher barriers to passing the  
33 written examination; and

34 (f) The authority shall administer, through contract, a program  
35 to link eligible persons in recovery from behavioral health  
36 challenges who are seeking employment as peers with employers seeking  
37 to hire peers, including certified peer specialists. The authority  
38 must contract for this program with an organization that provides  
39 peer workforce development, peer coaching, and other peer supportive  
40 services. The contract must require the organization to create and

1 maintain a statewide database which is easily accessible to eligible  
2 persons in recovery who are seeking employment as peers and potential  
3 employers seeking to hire peers, including certified peer  
4 specialists. The program must be fully implemented by July 1, 2024.

5 (6) For the purposes of this section, the term "peer crisis  
6 responder" means a peer specialist certified under chapter 18.--- RCW  
7 (the new chapter created in section 22 of this act) who has completed  
8 the training under subsection (3) of this section whose job involves  
9 responding to behavioral health emergencies, including those  
10 dispatched through a 988 crisis hotline or the 911 system.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 Behavioral health agencies must reduce the caseload for approved  
14 supervisors who are providing supervision to certified peer  
15 specialist trainees seeking certification under chapter 18.--- RCW  
16 (the new chapter created in section 22 of this act), in accordance  
17 with standards established by the Washington state certified peer  
18 specialist advisory committee.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 15.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24  
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) Beginning January 1, 2027, a person who engages in the  
22 practice of peer support services and who bills a health carrier or  
23 medical assistance or whose employer bills a health carrier or  
24 medical assistance for those services must hold an active credential  
25 as a certified peer specialist or certified peer specialist trainee  
26 under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 22 of  
27 this act).

28 (2) A person who is registered as an agency-affiliated counselor  
29 under chapter 18.19 RCW who engages in the practice of peer support  
30 services and whose agency, as defined in RCW 18.19.020, bills medical  
31 assistance for those services must hold a certificate as a certified  
32 peer specialist or certified peer specialist trainee under chapter  
33 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 22 of this act) no  
34 later than January 1, 2027.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 16.** A new section is added to chapter 48.43  
36 RCW to read as follows:

1 By July 1, 2026, each carrier shall provide access to services  
2 provided by certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist  
3 trainees in a manner sufficient to meet the network access standards  
4 set forth in rules established by the office of the insurance  
5 commissioner.

6 **Sec. 17.** RCW 18.130.040 and 2021 c 179 s 7 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (1) This chapter applies only to the secretary and the boards and  
9 commissions having jurisdiction in relation to the professions  
10 licensed under the chapters specified in this section. This chapter  
11 does not apply to any business or profession not licensed under the  
12 chapters specified in this section.

13 (2) (a) The secretary has authority under this chapter in relation  
14 to the following professions:

15 (i) Dispensing opticians licensed and designated apprentices  
16 under chapter 18.34 RCW;

17 (ii) Midwives licensed under chapter 18.50 RCW;

18 (iii) Ocularists licensed under chapter 18.55 RCW;

19 (iv) Massage therapists and businesses licensed under chapter  
20 18.108 RCW;

21 (v) Dental hygienists licensed under chapter 18.29 RCW;

22 (vi) Acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine  
23 practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW;

24 (vii) Radiologic technologists certified and X-ray technicians  
25 registered under chapter 18.84 RCW;

26 (viii) Respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter  
27 18.89 RCW;

28 (ix) Hypnotherapists and agency affiliated counselors registered  
29 and advisors and counselors certified under chapter 18.19 RCW;

30 (x) Persons licensed as mental health counselors, mental health  
31 counselor associates, marriage and family therapists, marriage and  
32 family therapist associates, social workers, social work associates—  
33 advanced, and social work associates—independent clinical under  
34 chapter 18.225 RCW;

35 (xi) Persons registered as nursing pool operators under chapter  
36 18.52C RCW;

37 (xii) Nursing assistants registered or certified or medication  
38 assistants endorsed under chapter 18.88A RCW;

1 (xiii) Dietitians and nutritionists certified under chapter  
2 18.138 RCW;

3 (xiv) Substance use disorder professionals, substance use  
4 disorder professional trainees, or co-occurring disorder specialists  
5 certified under chapter 18.205 RCW;

6 (xv) Sex offender treatment providers and certified affiliate sex  
7 offender treatment providers certified under chapter 18.155 RCW;

8 (xvi) Persons licensed and certified under chapter 18.73 RCW or  
9 RCW 18.71.205;

10 (xvii) Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under chapter 18.200  
11 RCW;

12 (xviii) Surgical technologists registered under chapter 18.215  
13 RCW;

14 (xix) Recreational therapists under chapter 18.230 RCW;

15 (xx) Animal massage therapists certified under chapter 18.240  
16 RCW;

17 (xxi) Athletic trainers licensed under chapter 18.250 RCW;

18 (xxii) Home care aides certified under chapter 18.88B RCW;

19 (xxiii) Genetic counselors licensed under chapter 18.290 RCW;

20 (xxiv) Reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW;

21 (xxv) Medical assistants-certified, medical assistants-  
22 hemodialysis technician, medical assistants-phlebotomist, forensic  
23 phlebotomist, and medical assistants-registered certified and  
24 registered under chapter 18.360 RCW; (~~and~~)

25 (xxvi) Behavior analysts, assistant behavior analysts, and  
26 behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW; and

27 (xxvii) Certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist  
28 trainees under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section  
29 22 of this act).

30 (b) The boards and commissions having authority under this  
31 chapter are as follows:

32 (i) The podiatric medical board as established in chapter 18.22  
33 RCW;

34 (ii) The chiropractic quality assurance commission as established  
35 in chapter 18.25 RCW;

36 (iii) The dental quality assurance commission as established in  
37 chapter 18.32 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.32 RCW,  
38 licenses and registrations issued under chapter 18.260 RCW, and  
39 certifications issued under chapter 18.350 RCW;



- 1 (iv) The board of hearing and speech as established in chapter  
2 18.35 RCW;
- 3 (v) The board of examiners for nursing home administrators as  
4 established in chapter 18.52 RCW;
- 5 (vi) The optometry board as established in chapter 18.54 RCW  
6 governing licenses issued under chapter 18.53 RCW;
- 7 (vii) The board of osteopathic medicine and surgery as  
8 established in chapter 18.57 RCW governing licenses issued under  
9 chapter 18.57 RCW;
- 10 (viii) The pharmacy quality assurance commission as established  
11 in chapter 18.64 RCW governing licenses issued under chapters 18.64  
12 and 18.64A RCW;
- 13 (ix) The Washington medical commission as established in chapter  
14 18.71 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under chapters  
15 18.71 and 18.71A RCW;
- 16 (x) The board of physical therapy as established in chapter 18.74  
17 RCW;
- 18 (xi) The board of occupational therapy practice as established in  
19 chapter 18.59 RCW;
- 20 (xii) The nursing care quality assurance commission as  
21 established in chapter 18.79 RCW governing licenses and registrations  
22 issued under that chapter;
- 23 (xiii) The examining board of psychology and its disciplinary  
24 committee as established in chapter 18.83 RCW;
- 25 (xiv) The veterinary board of governors as established in chapter  
26 18.92 RCW;
- 27 (xv) The board of naturopathy established in chapter 18.36A RCW,  
28 governing licenses and certifications issued under that chapter; and
- 29 (xvi) The board of denturists established in chapter 18.30 RCW.
- 30 (3) In addition to the authority to discipline license holders,  
31 the disciplining authority has the authority to grant or deny  
32 licenses. The disciplining authority may also grant a license subject  
33 to conditions.
- 34 (4) All disciplining authorities shall adopt procedures to ensure  
35 substantially consistent application of this chapter, the uniform  
36 disciplinary act, among the disciplining authorities listed in  
37 subsection (2) of this section.

38 **Sec. 18.** RCW 18.130.040 and 2022 c 217 s 5 are each amended to  
39 read as follows:

1 (1) This chapter applies only to the secretary and the boards and  
2 commissions having jurisdiction in relation to the professions  
3 licensed under the chapters specified in this section. This chapter  
4 does not apply to any business or profession not licensed under the  
5 chapters specified in this section.

6 (2) (a) The secretary has authority under this chapter in relation  
7 to the following professions:

8 (i) Dispensing opticians licensed and designated apprentices  
9 under chapter 18.34 RCW;

10 (ii) Midwives licensed under chapter 18.50 RCW;

11 (iii) Ocularists licensed under chapter 18.55 RCW;

12 (iv) Massage therapists and businesses licensed under chapter  
13 18.108 RCW;

14 (v) Dental hygienists licensed under chapter 18.29 RCW;

15 (vi) Acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine  
16 practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW;

17 (vii) Radiologic technologists certified and X-ray technicians  
18 registered under chapter 18.84 RCW;

19 (viii) Respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter  
20 18.89 RCW;

21 (ix) Hypnotherapists and agency affiliated counselors registered  
22 and advisors and counselors certified under chapter 18.19 RCW;

23 (x) Persons licensed as mental health counselors, mental health  
24 counselor associates, marriage and family therapists, marriage and  
25 family therapist associates, social workers, social work associates—  
26 advanced, and social work associates—independent clinical under  
27 chapter 18.225 RCW;

28 (xi) Persons registered as nursing pool operators under chapter  
29 18.52C RCW;

30 (xii) Nursing assistants registered or certified or medication  
31 assistants endorsed under chapter 18.88A RCW;

32 (xiii) Dietitians and nutritionists certified under chapter  
33 18.138 RCW;

34 (xiv) Substance use disorder professionals, substance use  
35 disorder professional trainees, or co-occurring disorder specialists  
36 certified under chapter 18.205 RCW;

37 (xv) Sex offender treatment providers and certified affiliate sex  
38 offender treatment providers certified under chapter 18.155 RCW;

39 (xvi) Persons licensed and certified under chapter 18.73 RCW or  
40 RCW 18.71.205;

1 (xvii) Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under chapter 18.200  
2 RCW;

3 (xviii) Surgical technologists registered under chapter 18.215  
4 RCW;

5 (xix) Recreational therapists under chapter 18.230 RCW;

6 (xx) Animal massage therapists certified under chapter 18.240  
7 RCW;

8 (xxi) Athletic trainers licensed under chapter 18.250 RCW;

9 (xxii) Home care aides certified under chapter 18.88B RCW;

10 (xxiii) Genetic counselors licensed under chapter 18.290 RCW;

11 (xxiv) Reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW;

12 (xxv) Medical assistants-certified, medical assistants-  
13 hemodialysis technician, medical assistants-phlebotomist, forensic  
14 phlebotomist, and medical assistants-registered certified and  
15 registered under chapter 18.360 RCW;

16 (xxvi) Behavior analysts, assistant behavior analysts, and  
17 behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW; (~~and~~)

18 (xxvii) Birth doulas certified under chapter 18.47 RCW; and  
19 (xxviii) Certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist  
20 trainees under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section  
21 22 of this act).

22 (b) The boards and commissions having authority under this  
23 chapter are as follows:

24 (i) The podiatric medical board as established in chapter 18.22  
25 RCW;

26 (ii) The chiropractic quality assurance commission as established  
27 in chapter 18.25 RCW;

28 (iii) The dental quality assurance commission as established in  
29 chapter 18.32 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.32 RCW,  
30 licenses and registrations issued under chapter 18.260 RCW, and  
31 certifications issued under chapter 18.350 RCW;

32 (iv) The board of hearing and speech as established in chapter  
33 18.35 RCW;

34 (v) The board of examiners for nursing home administrators as  
35 established in chapter 18.52 RCW;

36 (vi) The optometry board as established in chapter 18.54 RCW  
37 governing licenses issued under chapter 18.53 RCW;

38 (vii) The board of osteopathic medicine and surgery as  
39 established in chapter 18.57 RCW governing licenses issued under  
40 chapter 18.57 RCW;

1 (viii) The pharmacy quality assurance commission as established  
2 in chapter 18.64 RCW governing licenses issued under chapters 18.64  
3 and 18.64A RCW;

4 (ix) The Washington medical commission as established in chapter  
5 18.71 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under chapters  
6 18.71 and 18.71A RCW;

7 (x) The board of physical therapy as established in chapter 18.74  
8 RCW;

9 (xi) The board of occupational therapy practice as established in  
10 chapter 18.59 RCW;

11 (xii) The nursing care quality assurance commission as  
12 established in chapter 18.79 RCW governing licenses and registrations  
13 issued under that chapter;

14 (xiii) The examining board of psychology and its disciplinary  
15 committee as established in chapter 18.83 RCW;

16 (xiv) The veterinary board of governors as established in chapter  
17 18.92 RCW;

18 (xv) The board of naturopathy established in chapter 18.36A RCW,  
19 governing licenses and certifications issued under that chapter; and

20 (xvi) The board of denturists established in chapter 18.30 RCW.

21 (3) In addition to the authority to discipline license holders,  
22 the disciplining authority has the authority to grant or deny  
23 licenses. The disciplining authority may also grant a license subject  
24 to conditions.

25 (4) All disciplining authorities shall adopt procedures to ensure  
26 substantially consistent application of this chapter, the uniform  
27 disciplinary act, among the disciplining authorities listed in  
28 subsection (2) of this section.

29 **Sec. 19.** RCW 18.130.175 and 2022 c 43 s 10 are each amended to  
30 read as follows:

31 (1) In lieu of disciplinary action under RCW 18.130.160 and if  
32 the disciplining authority determines that the unprofessional conduct  
33 may be the result of an applicable impairing or potentially impairing  
34 health condition, the disciplining authority may refer the license  
35 holder to a physician health program or a voluntary substance use  
36 disorder monitoring program approved by the disciplining authority.

37 The cost of evaluation and treatment shall be the responsibility  
38 of the license holder, but the responsibility does not preclude  
39 payment by an employer, existing insurance coverage, or other

1 sources. Evaluation and treatment shall be provided by providers  
2 approved by the entity or the commission. The disciplining authority  
3 may also approve the use of out-of-state programs. Referral of the  
4 license holder to the physician health program or voluntary substance  
5 use disorder monitoring program shall be done only with the consent  
6 of the license holder. Referral to the physician health program or  
7 voluntary substance use disorder monitoring program may also include  
8 probationary conditions for a designated period of time. If the  
9 license holder does not consent to be referred to the program or does  
10 not successfully complete the program, the disciplining authority may  
11 take appropriate action under RCW 18.130.160 which includes  
12 suspension of the license unless or until the disciplining authority,  
13 in consultation with the director of the applicable program,  
14 determines the license holder is able to practice safely. The  
15 secretary shall adopt uniform rules for the evaluation by the  
16 disciplining authority of return to substance use or program  
17 violation on the part of a license holder in the program. The  
18 evaluation shall encourage program participation with additional  
19 conditions, in lieu of disciplinary action, when the disciplining  
20 authority determines that the license holder is able to continue to  
21 practice with reasonable skill and safety.

22 (2) In addition to approving the physician health program or the  
23 voluntary substance use disorder monitoring program that may receive  
24 referrals from the disciplining authority, the disciplining authority  
25 may establish by rule requirements for participation of license  
26 holders who are not being investigated or monitored by the  
27 disciplining authority. License holders voluntarily participating in  
28 the approved programs without being referred by the disciplining  
29 authority shall not be subject to disciplinary action under RCW  
30 18.130.160 for their impairing or potentially impairing health  
31 condition, and shall not have their participation made known to the  
32 disciplining authority, if they meet the requirements of this section  
33 and the program in which they are participating.

34 (3) The license holder shall sign a waiver allowing the program  
35 to release information to the disciplining authority if the licensee  
36 does not comply with the requirements of this section or is unable to  
37 practice with reasonable skill or safety. The physician health  
38 program or voluntary substance use disorder program shall report to  
39 the disciplining authority any license holder who fails to comply  
40 with the requirements of this section or the program or who, in the

1 opinion of the program, is unable to practice with reasonable skill  
2 or safety. License holders shall report to the disciplining authority  
3 if they fail to comply with this section or do not complete the  
4 program's requirements. License holders may, upon the agreement of  
5 the program and disciplining authority, reenter the program if they  
6 have previously failed to comply with this section.

7 (4) Program records including, but not limited to, case notes,  
8 progress notes, laboratory reports, evaluation and treatment records,  
9 electronic and written correspondence within the program, and between  
10 the program and the participant or other involved entities including,  
11 but not limited to, employers, credentialing bodies, referents, or  
12 other collateral sources, relating to license holders referred to or  
13 voluntarily participating in approved programs are confidential and  
14 exempt from disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW and shall not be  
15 subject to discovery by subpoena or admissible as evidence except:

16 (a) To defend any civil action by a license holder regarding the  
17 restriction or revocation of that individual's clinical or staff  
18 privileges, or termination of a license holder's employment. In such  
19 an action, the program will, upon subpoena issued by either party to  
20 the action, and upon the requesting party seeking a protective order  
21 for the requested disclosure, provide to both parties of the action  
22 written disclosure that includes the following information:

23 (i) Verification of a health care professional's participation in  
24 the physician health program or voluntary substance use disorder  
25 monitoring program as it relates to aspects of program involvement at  
26 issue in the civil action;

27 (ii) The dates of participation;

28 (iii) Whether or not the program identified an impairing or  
29 potentially impairing health condition;

30 (iv) Whether the health care professional was compliant with the  
31 requirements of the physician health program or voluntary substance  
32 use disorder monitoring program; and

33 (v) Whether the health care professional successfully completed  
34 the physician health program or voluntary substance use disorder  
35 monitoring program; and

36 (b) Records provided to the disciplining authority for cause as  
37 described in subsection (3) of this section. Program records relating  
38 to license holders mandated to the program, through order or by  
39 stipulation, by the disciplining authority or relating to license  
40 holders reported to the disciplining authority by the program for

1 cause, must be released to the disciplining authority at the request  
2 of the disciplining authority. Records held by the disciplining  
3 authority under this section are exempt from chapter 42.56 RCW and  
4 are not subject to discovery by subpoena except by the license  
5 holder.

6 (5) This section does not affect an employer's right or ability  
7 to make employment-related decisions regarding a license holder. This  
8 section does not restrict the authority of the disciplining authority  
9 to take disciplinary action for any other unprofessional conduct.

10 (6) A person who, in good faith, reports information or takes  
11 action in connection with this section is immune from civil liability  
12 for reporting information or taking the action.

13 (a) The immunity from civil liability provided by this section  
14 shall be liberally construed to accomplish the purposes of this  
15 section, and applies to both license holders and students and  
16 trainees when students and trainees of the applicable professions are  
17 served by the program. The persons entitled to immunity shall  
18 include:

19 (i) An approved physician health program or voluntary substance  
20 use disorder monitoring program;

21 (ii) The professional association affiliated with the program;

22 (iii) Members, employees, or agents of the program or  
23 associations;

24 (iv) Persons reporting a license holder as being possibly  
25 impaired or providing information about the license holder's  
26 impairment; and

27 (v) Professionals supervising or monitoring the course of the  
28 program participant's treatment or rehabilitation.

29 (b) The courts are strongly encouraged to impose sanctions on  
30 program participants and their attorneys whose allegations under this  
31 subsection are not made in good faith and are without either  
32 reasonable objective, substantive grounds, or both.

33 (c) The immunity provided in this section is in addition to any  
34 other immunity provided by law.

35 (7) In the case of a person who is applying to be a substance use  
36 disorder professional or substance use disorder professional trainee  
37 certified under chapter 18.205 RCW, an agency affiliated counselor  
38 registered under chapter 18.19 RCW, or a peer specialist or peer  
39 specialist trainee certified under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new  
40 chapter created in section 22 of this act), if the person is:

1 (a) Less than one year in recovery from a substance use disorder,  
2 the duration of time that the person may be required to participate  
3 in an approved substance use disorder monitoring program may not  
4 exceed the amount of time necessary for the person to achieve one  
5 year in recovery; or

6 (b) At least one year in recovery from a substance use disorder,  
7 the person may not be required to participate in the approved  
8 substance use disorder monitoring program.

9 ~~((In the case of a person who is applying to be an agency  
10 affiliated counselor registered under chapter 18.19 RCW and practices  
11 or intends to practice as a peer counselor in an agency, as defined  
12 in RCW 18.19.020, if the person is:~~

13 ~~(a) Less than one year in recovery from a substance use disorder,  
14 the duration of time that the person may be required to participate  
15 in the approved substance use disorder monitoring program may not  
16 exceed the amount of time necessary for the person to achieve one  
17 year in recovery; or~~

18 ~~(b) At least one year in recovery from a substance use disorder,  
19 the person may not be required to participate in the approved  
20 substance use disorder monitoring program))~~ The provisions of  
21 subsection (7) of this section apply to any person employed as a peer  
22 specialist as of July 1, 2025, participating in a program under this  
23 section as of July 1, 2025, and applying to become a certified peer  
24 specialist under section 7 of this act, regardless of when the  
25 person's participation in a program began. To this extent, subsection  
26 (7) of this section applies retroactively, but in all other respects  
27 it applies prospectively.

28 **Sec. 20.** RCW 43.43.842 and 2021 c 215 s 150 are each amended to  
29 read as follows:

30 (1)(a) The secretary of social and health services and the  
31 secretary of health shall adopt additional requirements for the  
32 licensure or relicensure of agencies, facilities, and licensed  
33 individuals who provide care and treatment to vulnerable adults,  
34 including nursing pools registered under chapter 18.52C RCW. These  
35 additional requirements shall ensure that any person associated with  
36 a licensed agency or facility having unsupervised access with a  
37 vulnerable adult shall not be the respondent in an active vulnerable  
38 adult protection order under chapter 7.105 RCW, nor have been: (i)  
39 Convicted of a crime against children or other persons as defined in



1 RCW 43.43.830, except as provided in this section; (ii) convicted of  
2 crimes relating to financial exploitation as defined in RCW  
3 43.43.830, except as provided in this section; or (iii) found in any  
4 disciplinary board final decision to have abused a vulnerable adult  
5 as defined in RCW 43.43.830.

6 (b) A person associated with a licensed agency or facility who  
7 has unsupervised access with a vulnerable adult shall make the  
8 disclosures specified in RCW 43.43.834(2). The person shall make the  
9 disclosures in writing, sign, and swear to the contents under penalty  
10 of perjury. The person shall, in the disclosures, specify all crimes  
11 against children or other persons, all crimes relating to financial  
12 exploitation, and all crimes relating to drugs as defined in RCW  
13 43.43.830, committed by the person.

14 (2) The rules adopted under this section shall permit the  
15 licensee to consider the criminal history of an applicant for  
16 employment in a licensed facility when the applicant has one or more  
17 convictions for a past offense and:

18 (a) The offense was simple assault, assault in the fourth degree,  
19 or the same offense as it may be renamed, and three or more years  
20 have passed between the most recent conviction and the date of  
21 application for employment;

22 (b) The offense was prostitution, or the same offense as it may  
23 be renamed, and three or more years have passed between the most  
24 recent conviction and the date of application for employment;

25 (c) The offense was theft in the third degree, or the same  
26 offense as it may be renamed, and three or more years have passed  
27 between the most recent conviction and the date of application for  
28 employment;

29 (d) The offense was theft in the second degree, or the same  
30 offense as it may be renamed, and five or more years have passed  
31 between the most recent conviction and the date of application for  
32 employment;

33 (e) The offense was forgery, or the same offense as it may be  
34 renamed, and five or more years have passed between the most recent  
35 conviction and the date of application for employment;

36 (f) The department of social and health services reviewed the  
37 employee's otherwise disqualifying criminal history through the  
38 department of social and health services' background assessment  
39 review team process conducted in 2002, and determined that such  
40 employee could remain in a position covered by this section; or

1 (g) The otherwise disqualifying conviction or disposition has  
2 been the subject of a pardon, annulment, or other equivalent  
3 procedure.

4 The offenses set forth in (a) through (g) of this subsection do  
5 not automatically disqualify an applicant from employment by a  
6 licensee. Nothing in this section may be construed to require the  
7 employment of any person against a licensee's judgment.

8 (3) The rules adopted pursuant to subsection (2) of this section  
9 may not allow a licensee to automatically deny an applicant with a  
10 conviction for an offense set forth in subsection (2) of this section  
11 for a position as a substance use disorder professional or substance  
12 use disorder professional trainee certified under chapter 18.205 RCW,  
13 as an agency affiliated counselor registered under chapter 18.19 RCW  
14 practicing as a peer counselor in an agency or facility, or as a peer  
15 specialist or peer specialist trainee certified under chapter 18.---  
16 RCW (the new chapter created in section 22 of this act), if:

17 (a) At least one year has passed between the applicant's most  
18 recent conviction for an offense set forth in subsection (2) of this  
19 section and the date of application for employment;

20 (b) The offense was committed as a result of the applicant's  
21 substance use or untreated mental health symptoms; and

22 (c) The applicant is at least one year in recovery from a  
23 substance use disorder, whether through abstinence or stability on  
24 medication-assisted therapy, or in recovery from a mental health  
25 disorder.

26 ~~(4) ((The rules adopted pursuant to subsection (2) of this~~  
27 ~~section may not allow a licensee to automatically deny an applicant~~  
28 ~~with a conviction for an offense set forth in subsection (2) of this~~  
29 ~~section for a position as an agency affiliated counselor registered~~  
30 ~~under chapter 18.19 RCW practicing as a peer counselor in an agency~~  
31 ~~or facility if:~~

32 ~~(a) At least one year has passed between the applicant's most~~  
33 ~~recent conviction for an offense set forth in subsection (2) of this~~  
34 ~~section and the date of application for employment;~~

35 ~~(b) The offense was committed as a result of the person's~~  
36 ~~substance use or untreated mental health symptoms; and~~

37 ~~(c) The applicant is at least one year in recovery from a~~  
38 ~~substance use disorder, whether through abstinence or stability on~~  
39 ~~medication-assisted therapy, or in recovery from mental health~~  
40 ~~challenges.~~

1       ~~(5))~~) In consultation with law enforcement personnel, the  
2 secretary of social and health services and the secretary of health  
3 shall investigate, or cause to be investigated, the conviction record  
4 and the protection proceeding record information under this chapter  
5 of the staff of each agency or facility under their respective  
6 jurisdictions seeking licensure or relicensure. An individual  
7 responding to a criminal background inquiry request from his or her  
8 employer or potential employer shall disclose the information about  
9 his or her criminal history under penalty of perjury. The secretaries  
10 shall use the information solely for the purpose of determining  
11 eligibility for licensure or relicensure. Criminal justice agencies  
12 shall provide the secretaries such information as they may have and  
13 that the secretaries may require for such purpose.

14       **Sec. 21.** RCW 43.70.250 and 2019 c 415 s 966 are each amended to  
15 read as follows:

16       (1) It shall be the policy of the state of Washington that the  
17 cost of each professional, occupational, or business licensing  
18 program be fully borne by the members of that profession, occupation,  
19 or business.

20       (2) The secretary shall from time to time establish the amount of  
21 all application fees, license fees, registration fees, examination  
22 fees, permit fees, renewal fees, and any other fee associated with  
23 licensing or regulation of professions, occupations, or businesses  
24 administered by the department. Any and all fees or assessments, or  
25 both, levied on the state to cover the costs of the operations and  
26 activities of the interstate health professions licensure compacts  
27 with participating authorities listed under chapter 18.130 RCW shall  
28 be borne by the persons who hold licenses issued pursuant to the  
29 authority and procedures established under the compacts. In fixing  
30 said fees, the secretary shall set the fees for each program at a  
31 sufficient level to defray the costs of administering that program  
32 and the cost of regulating licensed volunteer medical workers in  
33 accordance with RCW 18.130.360, except as provided in RCW 18.79.202.  
34 In no case may the secretary (~~increase a licensing fee for an~~  
35 ~~ambulatory surgical facility licensed under chapter 70.230 RCW during~~  
36 ~~the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium, nor may he or she commence the~~  
37 ~~adoption of rules to increase a licensing fee during the 2019-2021~~  
38 ~~fiscal biennium)) impose any certification, examination, or renewal  
39 fee upon a person seeking certification as a certified peer~~

1 specialist trainee under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created  
2 in section 22 of this act) or, between July 1, 2025, and July 1,  
3 2030, impose a certification, examination, or renewal fee of more  
4 than \$100 upon any person seeking certification as a certified peer  
5 specialist under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in  
6 section 22 of this act).

7 (3) All such fees shall be fixed by rule adopted by the secretary  
8 in accordance with the provisions of the administrative procedure  
9 act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

10 NEW SECTION. Sec. 22. Sections 1 through 12 of this act  
11 constitute a new chapter in Title 18 RCW.

12 NEW SECTION. Sec. 23. Section 17 of this act expires October 1,  
13 2023.

14 NEW SECTION. Sec. 24. Section 18 of this act takes effect  
15 October 1, 2023.

16 NEW SECTION. Sec. 25. If specific funding for the purposes of  
17 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
18 provided by June 30, 2023, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
19 act is null and void.

--- END ---