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**SENATE BILL 5452**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Slatter and Nobles

Read first time 01/23/25. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to allowing board-certified psychiatric  
2 pharmacists to be licensed as agency-affiliated counselors; and  
3 amending RCW 18.19.090.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.19.090 and 2023 c 425 s 15 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) Application for agency affiliated counselor, certified  
8 counselor, certified adviser, or hypnotherapist must be made on forms  
9 approved by the secretary. The secretary may require information  
10 necessary to determine whether applicants meet the qualifications for  
11 the credential and whether there are any grounds for denial of the  
12 credential, or for issuance of a conditional credential, under this  
13 chapter or chapter 18.130 RCW. The application for agency affiliated  
14 counselor, certified counselor, or certified adviser must include a  
15 description of the applicant's orientation, discipline, theory, or  
16 technique. Each applicant shall pay a fee determined by the secretary  
17 as provided in RCW 43.70.250, which shall accompany the application.

18 (2) Applicants for agency affiliated counselor must provide  
19 satisfactory documentation that they are employed by an agency, have  
20 an offer of employment from an agency, or are a student intern as  
21 defined by the department.

1 (3) Applicants for certified agency affiliated counselor must  
2 complete the following:

3 (a) A bachelor's degree in counseling or one of the social  
4 sciences from an accredited college or university which includes  
5 coursework specified in subsection (5) of this section; and

6 (b) At least five years of experience in direct treatment of  
7 persons with a mental disorder that was gained under the supervision  
8 of a mental health professional who is able to independently provide  
9 mental health assessments and diagnoses according to the scope of  
10 practice of the mental health professional's credential.

11 (4) Applicants for licensed agency affiliated counselor must  
12 complete the following:

13 (a) An advanced degree in counseling or one of the social  
14 sciences from an accredited college or university which includes  
15 coursework specified in subsection (5) of this section(~~(†)~~), and

16 (~~((b) At~~) at least two years of experience in direct treatment  
17 of persons with a mental disorder that was gained under the  
18 supervision of a mental health professional who is able to  
19 independently provide mental health assessments and diagnoses  
20 according to the scope of practice of the mental health  
21 professional's credential; or

22 (b) An advanced degree in health care from an accredited college  
23 or university which includes coursework specified in subsection (5)  
24 of this section, with at least two years of experience in behavioral  
25 health care, including board-certified psychiatric pharmacists.

26 (5) Applicants for a certified or licensed agency affiliated  
27 counselor credential must have (~~(counseling-specific)~~) counseling or  
28 health care coursework as determined by the department in rule.

29 (6)(a) Applicants for licensed agency affiliated counselor are  
30 not required to meet the coursework requirements in subsection (5) of  
31 this section if, prior to the effective date of the rules adopted  
32 under subsection (5) of this section, the applicant held a mental  
33 health professional designation based on meeting one of the following  
34 criteria:

35 (i) The applicant held an advanced degree in counseling or one of  
36 the social sciences from an accredited college or university and had  
37 two years of experience in direct treatment of persons with mental  
38 illness or emotional disturbance that was gained under the  
39 supervision of a mental health professional recognized by the  
40 department or attested to by a licensed behavioral health agency;

1 (ii) The applicant met the waiver criteria of RCW 71.24.260, and  
2 the waiver was granted prior to 1986; or

3 (iii) The applicant had an approved waiver to perform the duties  
4 of a mental health professional, that was requested by the behavioral  
5 health organization and granted by the mental health division prior  
6 to July 1, 2001.

7 (b) Applicants for certified agency affiliated counselor are not  
8 required to meet the coursework requirements in subsection (5) of  
9 this section if, prior to the effective date of the rules adopted  
10 under subsection (5) of this section, the applicant met the  
11 bachelor's degree and experience requirements in subsection (3) of  
12 this section.

13 (c) Applicants for licensed or certified agency affiliated  
14 counselors eligible for the legacy provision under this subsection  
15 must apply to the department before July 1, 2027. After that date all  
16 new applicants must meet the requirements in subsections (3) and (4)  
17 of this section. "New applicants" does not include those reinstating  
18 a previously issued agency affiliated counselor certification.

19 (7) At the time of application for initial certification,  
20 applicants for certified counselor prior to July 1, 2010, are  
21 required to:

22 (a) Have been registered for no less than five years at the time  
23 of application for an initial certification;

24 (b) Have held a valid, active registration that is in good  
25 standing and be in compliance with any disciplinary process and  
26 orders at the time of application for an initial certification;

27 (c) Show evidence of having completed coursework in risk  
28 assessment, ethics, appropriate screening and referral, and  
29 Washington state law and other subjects identified by the secretary;

30 (d) Pass an examination in risk assessment, ethics, appropriate  
31 screening and referral, and Washington state law, and other subjects  
32 as determined by the secretary; and

33 (e) Have a written consultation agreement with a credential  
34 holder who meets the qualifications established by the secretary.

35 (8) Unless eligible for certification under subsection (7) of  
36 this section, applicants for certified counselor or certified adviser  
37 are required to:

38 (a)(i) Have a bachelor's degree in a counseling-related field, if  
39 applying for certified counselor; or

1           (ii) Have an associate degree in a counseling-related field and a  
2 supervised internship, if applying for certified adviser;

3           (b) Pass an examination in risk assessment, ethics, appropriate  
4 screening and referral, and Washington state law, and other subjects  
5 as determined by the secretary; and

6           (c) Have a written supervisory agreement with a supervisor who  
7 meets the qualifications established by the secretary.

8           (9) Each applicant shall include payment of the fee determined by  
9 the secretary as provided in RCW 43.70.250.

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