

Chapter 18.122 RCW
REGULATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS—UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

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RCW 18.122.010 Legislative intent. The legislature takes note of the burgeoning number of bills proposed to regulate new health and health-related professions and occupations. The legislature further recognizes the number of allied health professions seeking independent practice. Potentially at least one hundred forty-five discrete health professions and occupations are recognized nationally, with at least two hundred fifty secondary job classifications. A uniform and streamlined credentialing process needs to be established to permit the department of health to administer the health professional regulatory programs in the most cost-effective, accountable, and uniform manner. The public interest will be served by establishing uniform administrative provisions for the regulated professions under the jurisdiction of the department of health regulated after July 26, 1987. [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 306; 1987 c 150 s 61.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.020 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) To "credential" means to license, certify, or register an applicant.

(2) "Department" means the department of health.

(3) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.

(4) "Health profession" means a profession providing health services regulated under the laws of this state and under which laws this statute is specifically referenced.

(5) "Credential" means the license, certificate, or registration issued to a person. [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 307; 1987 c 150 s 62.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.030 Registration, certification, and licensure. (1) The three levels of professional credentialing as defined in chapter 18.120 RCW are:

(a) Registration, which is the least restrictive, and requires formal notification of the department of health identifying the practitioner, and does not require qualifying examinations;

(b) Certification, which is a voluntary process recognizing an individual who qualifies by examination and meets established educational prerequisites, and which protects the title of practice; and

(c) Licensure, which is the most restrictive and requires qualification by examination and educational prerequisites of a practitioner whose title is protected and whose scope of practice is restricted to only those licensed.

(2) No person may practice or represent oneself as a practitioner of a health profession by use of any title or description of services without being registered to practice by the department of health, unless otherwise exempted by this chapter.

(3) No person may represent oneself as certified or use any title or description of services without applying for certification, meeting the required qualifications, and being certified by the department of health, unless otherwise exempted by this chapter.

(4) No person may represent oneself as licensed, use any title or description of services, or engage in any practice without applying for licensure, meeting the required qualifications, and being licensed by the department of health, unless otherwise exempted by this chapter. [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 308; 1987 c 150 s 63.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.040 Exemptions. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit or restrict:

(1) The practice by an individual licensed, certified, or registered under the laws of this state and performing services within the authorized scope of practice;

(2) The practice by an individual employed by the government of the United States while engaged in the performance of duties prescribed by the laws of the United States;

(3) The practice by a person who is a regular student in an educational program approved by the secretary, and whose performance of services is pursuant to a regular course of instruction or assignments from an instructor and under the general supervision of the instructor. [1991 c 3 s 260; 1987 c 150 s 64.]

RCW 18.122.050 Powers of secretary. In addition to any other authority provided by law, the secretary has the authority to:

- (1) Adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW necessary to implement this chapter;
- (2) Establish all credentialing, examination, and renewal fees in accordance with RCW 43.70.250;
- (3) Establish forms and procedures necessary to administer this chapter;
- (4) Register any applicants, and to issue certificates or licenses to applicants who have met the education, training, and examination requirements for licensure or certification and to deny a credential to applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications, except that proceedings concerning the denial of credentials based upon unprofessional conduct or impairment shall be governed by the uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW;
- (5) Hire clerical, administrative, investigative, and other staff as needed to implement this chapter, and hire individuals credentialed under this chapter to serve as examiners for any practical examinations;
- (6) Determine minimum education requirements and evaluate and designate those educational programs from which graduation will be accepted as proof of eligibility to take a qualifying examination for applicants for certification or licensure;
- (7) Prepare, grade, and administer, or determine the nature of, and supervise the grading and administration of, examinations for applicants for certification or licensure;
- (8) Determine whether alternative methods of training are equivalent to formal education, and establish forms, procedures, and criteria for evaluation of an applicant's alternative training to determine the applicant's eligibility to take any qualifying examination;
- (9) Determine which states have credentialing requirements equivalent to those of this state, and issue credentials to individuals credentialed in those states without examinations;
- (10) Define and approve any experience requirement for credentialing;
- (11) Implement and administer a program for consumer education;
- (12) Adopt rules implementing a continuing competency program;
- (13) Maintain the official department record of all applicants and licensees; and
- (14) Establish by rule the procedures for an appeal of an examination failure. [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 309; 1987 c 150 s 65.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.060 Record of proceedings. The secretary shall keep an official record of all proceedings. A part of the record shall consist of a register of all applicants for credentialing under this chapter and the results of each application. [1991 c 3 s 261; 1987 c 150 s 66.]

RCW 18.122.070 Advisory committees. (1) The secretary has the authority to appoint advisory committees to further the purposes of this chapter. Each such committee shall be composed of five members, one member initially appointed for a term of one year, two for a term

of two years, and two for a term of three years. Subsequent appointments shall be for terms of three years. No person may serve as a member of the committee for more than two consecutive terms. Members of an advisory committee shall be residents of this state. Each committee shall be composed of three individuals registered, certified, or licensed in the category designated, and two members who represent the public at large and are unaffiliated directly or indirectly with the profession being credentialed.

(2) The secretary may remove any member of the advisory committees for cause as specified by rule. In the case of a vacancy, the secretary shall appoint a person to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

(3) The advisory committees shall each meet at the times and places designated by the secretary and shall hold meetings during the year as necessary to provide advice to the director [secretary]. The committee may elect a chair and a vice chair. A majority of the members currently serving shall constitute a quorum.

(4) Each member of an advisory committee shall be reimbursed for travel expenses as authorized in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. In addition, members of the committees shall be compensated in accordance with RCW 43.03.240 when engaged in the authorized business of their committees.

(5) The secretary, members of advisory committees, or individuals acting on their behalf are immune from suit in any action, civil or criminal, based on any credentialing or disciplinary proceedings or other official acts performed in the course of their duties. [1991 c 3 s 262; 1987 c 150 s 67.]

RCW 18.122.080 Credentialing requirements. (1) The secretary shall issue a license or certificate, as appropriate, to any applicant who demonstrates to the secretary's satisfaction that the following requirements have been met:

(a) Graduation from an educational program approved by the secretary or successful completion of alternate training meeting established criteria;

(b) Successful completion of an approved examination; and

(c) Successful completion of any experience requirement established by the secretary.

(2) The secretary shall establish by rule what constitutes adequate proof of meeting the criteria.

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

(4) The secretary shall issue a registration to any applicant who completes an application which identifies the name and address of the applicant, the registration being requested, and information required by the secretary necessary to establish whether there are grounds for denial of a registration or issuance of a conditional registration under chapter 18.130 RCW. [1991 c 3 s 263; 1987 c 150 s 68.]

RCW 18.122.090 Approval of educational programs. The secretary shall establish by rule the standards and procedures for approval of educational programs and alternative training. The secretary may utilize or contract with individuals or organizations having expertise in the profession or in education to assist in the evaluations. The

secretary shall establish by rule the standards and procedures for revocation of approval of education programs. The standards and procedures set shall apply equally to educational programs and training in the United States and in foreign jurisdictions. The secretary may establish a fee for educational program evaluations. [1991 c 3 s 264; 1987 c 150 s 69.]

RCW 18.122.100 Examinations. (1) The date and location of examinations shall be established by the secretary. Applicants shall be scheduled for the next examination following the filing of the application. The secretary shall establish by rule the examination application deadline.

(2) The secretary or the secretary's designees shall examine each applicant, by means determined most effective, on subjects appropriate to the scope of practice, as applicable. Such examinations shall be limited to the purpose of determining whether the applicant possesses the minimum skill and knowledge necessary to practice competently.

(3) The examination papers, all grading of the papers, and the grading of any practical work shall be preserved for a period of not less than one year after the secretary has made and published the decisions. All examinations shall be conducted under fair and wholly impartial methods.

(4) Any applicant failing to make the required grade in the first examination may take up to three subsequent examinations as the applicant desires upon prepaying a fee determined by the secretary under RCW 43.70.250 for each subsequent examination. Upon failing four examinations, the secretary may invalidate the original application and require such remedial education before the person may take future examinations.

(5) The secretary may approve an examination prepared or administered by a private testing agency or association of licensing agencies for use by an applicant in meeting the credentialing requirements. [2023 c 425 s 9; 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 310; 1987 c 150 s 70.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.110 Applications. Applications for credentialing shall be submitted on forms provided by the secretary. The secretary may require any information and documentation which reasonably relates to the need to determine whether the applicant meets the criteria for credentialing provided for in this chapter and chapter 18.130 RCW. Each applicant shall pay a fee determined by the secretary under RCW 43.70.250. The fee shall accompany the application. [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 311; 1987 c 150 s 71.]

Effective date—Severability—1989 1st ex.s. c 9: See RCW 43.70.910 and 43.70.920.

RCW 18.122.120 Waiver of examination for initial applications. The secretary shall waive the examination and credential a person authorized to practice within the state of Washington if the secretary

determines that the person meets commonly accepted standards of education and experience for the profession. This section applies only to those individuals who file an application for waiver within one year of the establishment of the authorized practice. [1991 c 3 s 265; 1987 c 150 s 72.]

RCW 18.122.130 Endorsement. An applicant holding a credential in another state may be credentialed to practice in this state without examination if the secretary determines that the other state's credentialing standards are substantially equivalent to the standards in this state. [1991 c 3 s 266; 1987 c 150 s 73.]

RCW 18.122.140 Renewals. The secretary shall establish by rule the procedural requirements and fees for renewal of a credential. Failure to renew shall invalidate the credential and all privileges granted by the credential. If a license or certificate has lapsed for a period longer than three years, the person shall demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the secretary by taking continuing education courses, or meeting other standards determined by the secretary. [1991 c 3 s 267; 1987 c 150 s 74.]

RCW 18.122.150 Application of uniform disciplinary act. The uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, shall govern the issuance and denial of credentials, unauthorized practice, and the discipline of persons credentialed under this chapter. The secretary shall be the disciplining authority under this chapter. [1991 c 3 s 268; 1987 c 150 s 75.]

RCW 18.122.160 Application of chapter. This chapter only applies to a business or profession regulated under the laws of this state if this chapter is specifically referenced in the laws regulating that business or profession. [1987 c 150 s 76.]

RCW 18.122.165 Health care administration work groups—Secretary's participation. Pursuant to RCW 48.165.030 and 48.165.035, the secretary or his or her designee shall participate in the work groups and, within funds appropriated specifically for this purpose, implement the standards to enable the department to transmit data to and receive data from the uniform process. [2009 c 298 s 7.]

RCW 18.122.900 Section captions. Section captions as used in this chapter do not constitute any part of the law. [1987 c 150 s 77.]

RCW 18.122.901 Severability—1987 c 150. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected. [1987 c 150 s 80.]