

**RCW 71.24.037 Licensed or certified behavioral health agencies—Minimum standards—Inspections.** (1) The secretary shall license or certify any agency or facility that: (a) Submits payment of the fee established under RCW 43.70.110 and 43.70.250; and (b) submits a complete application that demonstrates the ability to comply with requirements for operating and maintaining an agency or facility in statute or rule.

(2) The secretary shall establish by rule minimum standards for licensed or certified behavioral health agencies that must, at a minimum, establish: (a) Qualifications for staff providing services directly to persons with mental disorders, substance use disorders, or both; (b) the intended result of each service; and (c) the rights and responsibilities of persons receiving behavioral health services pursuant to this chapter and chapters 71.34 and 71.05 RCW. The secretary shall provide for deeming of licensed or certified behavioral health agencies as meeting state minimum standards as a result of accreditation by a recognized behavioral health accrediting body recognized and having a current agreement with the department.

(3) No licensed or certified behavioral health agency may advertise or represent itself as a licensed or certified behavioral health agency if approval has not been granted or has been denied, suspended, revoked, or canceled.

(4) Licensure or certification as a behavioral health agency is effective for one calendar year from the date of issuance of the license or certification. The license or certification must specify the types of services provided by the behavioral health agency that meet the standards adopted under this chapter. Renewal of a license or certification must be made in accordance with this section for initial approval and in accordance with the standards set forth in rules adopted by the secretary.

(5) Licensure or certification as a licensed or certified behavioral health agency must specify the types of services provided that meet the standards adopted under this chapter. Renewal of a license or certification must be made in accordance with this section for initial approval and in accordance with the standards set forth in rules adopted by the secretary.

(6) The department shall develop a process by which a provider may obtain dual licensure as an evaluation and treatment facility and secure withdrawal management and stabilization facility.

(7) Licensed or certified behavioral health agencies may not provide types of services for which the licensed or certified behavioral health agency has not been certified. Licensed or certified behavioral health agencies may provide services for which approval has been sought and is pending, if approval for the services has not been previously revoked or denied.

(8) The department shall maintain and periodically publish a current list of licensed or certified behavioral health agencies.

(9) (a) Licensed or certified behavioral health agencies providing voluntary inpatient or residential substance use disorder treatment services or withdrawal management services:

(i) Must comply with the policy submission and mandatory reporting requirements established in RCW 71.24.847; and

(ii) May not prohibit a person from receiving services at or being admitted to the agency based solely on prior instances of the person releasing the person's self from the facility prior to a clinical determination that the person had completed treatment.

(b) This subsection (9) does not apply to hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW and psychiatric hospitals licensed under chapter 71.12 RCW.

(10)(a) A licensed or certified behavioral health agency shall provide each patient seeking treatment for opioid use disorder or alcohol use disorder, whether receiving inpatient or outpatient treatment, with education related to pharmacological treatment options specific to the patient's diagnosed condition. The education must include an unbiased explanation of all recognized forms of treatment approved by the federal food and drug administration, as required under RCW 7.70.050 and 7.70.060, that are clinically appropriate for the patient. Providers may use the patient shared decision-making tools for opioid use disorder and alcohol use disorder developed by the addictions, drug, and alcohol institute at the University of Washington. If the patient elects a clinically appropriate pharmacological treatment option, the behavioral health agency shall support the patient with the implementation of the pharmacological treatment either by direct provision of the medication or by a warm handoff referral, if the treating provider is unable to directly provide the medication.

(b) Unless it meets the requirements of (a) of this subsection, a behavioral health agency may not:

(i) Advertise that it treats opioid use disorder or alcohol use disorder; or

(ii) Treat patients for opioid use disorder or alcohol use disorder, regardless of the form of treatment that the patient chooses.

(c)(i) Failure to meet the education requirements of (a) of this subsection may be an element of proof in demonstrating a breach of the duty to secure an informed consent under RCW 7.70.050.

(ii) Failure to meet the education and facilitation requirements of (a) of this subsection may be the basis of a disciplinary action under this section.

(d) This subsection does not apply to licensed behavioral health agencies that are units within a hospital licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW or a psychiatric hospital licensed under chapter 71.12 RCW. [2024 c 366 s 4; 2024 c 121 s 26; 2023 c 454 s 2. Prior: 2019 c 446 s 23; 2019 c 325 s 1007; 2018 c 201 s 4005; 2017 c 330 s 2; 2016 sp.s. c 29 s 505; 2001 c 323 s 11; 1999 c 10 s 5.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2024 c 121 s 26 and by 2024 c 366 s 4, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Findings—Intent—2024 c 366:** See note following RCW 71.24.847.

**Effective date—2019 c 325:** See note following RCW 71.24.011.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2018 c 201:** See notes following RCW 41.05.018.

**Finding—2017 c 330:** "The state finds that the department should not reduce the number of license violations found by field inspectors for the purpose of allowing licensed behavioral health service providers to avoid liability in a manner that permits the violating service provider to continue to provide care at the risk of public

safety. The state also recognizes the need to prohibit fraudulent transfers of licenses between licensed behavioral health service providers found in violation of the terms of their license agreement and their family members." [2017 c 330 s 1.]

**Effective dates—2016 sp.s. c 29:** See note following RCW 71.05.760.

**Short title—Right of action—2016 sp.s. c 29:** See notes following RCW 71.05.010.

**Purpose—Intent—1999 c 10:** See note following RCW 71.24.025.