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**SENATE BILL 5054**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators O'Ban, Brown, Conway, Wilson, L., Zeiger, Short, Van De Wege, and Wagoner

AN ACT Relating to increasing the behavioral health workforce by establishing a reciprocity program to increase the portability of behavioral health licenses and certifications; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.225 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) The department shall establish a reciprocity program for applicants for licensure or certification as a chemical dependency professional, mental health counselor, social worker, or marriage and family therapist in Washington state.

(b) This reciprocity program must apply to individuals who:

(i) Hold or have held within the past twelve months a license or certification in good standing from another state or territory of the United States which has an equivalent or greater scope of practice than a corresponding Washington state license or certification specified in (a) of this subsection; and

(ii) Have no disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history.

(2) The department shall issue a probationary license or certification to an applicant who meets the requirements of subsection (1) of this section. The department must determine what deficiencies, if any, exist between the training and education requirements of the foreign license or certification and, after consideration of the experience and capabilities of the applicant, determine whether it is appropriate to require the applicant to undergo additional training or education to maintain the probationary license or certification and within a reasonable time period transition to full licensure or certification. The department may place a reasonable time limit on a probationary license or certification and may, if appropriate, require the applicant to pass a jurisprudential exam.

(3) The department must maintain and publish a list of foreign licenses or certifications that the department has determined to have an equivalent or greater scope of practice and equivalent or greater training and education requirements than the corresponding Washington state license or certification specified in subsection (1)(a) of this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 18.225 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must explore options for adoption of an interstate compact or compacts supporting license portability for professionals licensed under this chapter and report recommendations to the governor and legislature by November 1, 2020.

(2) This section expires June 30, 2022.

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