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**SENATE BILL 5053**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators O'Ban, Sheldon, Becker, Brown, Wilson, L., Zeiger, Short, Takko, and Wagoner

Prefiled 12/24/18. Read first time 01/14/19. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing behavioral health workforce  
2 participation by addressing certification and licensure requirements;  
3 amending RCW 18.205.100 and 18.19.210; and creating a new section.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.205.100 and 2000 c 171 s 42 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 The secretary may establish by rule the standards and procedures  
8 for approval of educational programs and alternative training. The  
9 requirements for approved supervision towards certification must be  
10 the same for all applicants in the regular or alternative training  
11 pathways. The requirements for approved supervision towards  
12 certification must allow approved supervision to be provided by a  
13 licensed social worker or licensed mental health practitioner who has  
14 at least one year of experience in the treatment of substance use  
15 disorders or who has completed the alternative training requirements.  
16 The secretary may utilize or contract with individuals or  
17 organizations having expertise in the profession or in education to  
18 assist in the evaluations. The secretary shall establish by rule the  
19 standards and procedures for revocation of approval of educational  
20 programs. The standards and procedures set shall apply equally to  
21 educational programs and training in the United States and in foreign

1 jurisdictions. The secretary may establish a fee for educational  
2 program evaluations.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.19.210 and 2013 c 338 s 6 are each amended to  
4 read as follows:

5 (1)(a) An applicant for registration as an agency affiliated  
6 counselor who applies to the department within seven days of  
7 employment by an agency may work as an agency affiliated counselor  
8 (~~for up to sixty days~~) while the application is processed. The  
9 applicant must (~~stop working on the sixtieth day of employment if~~  
10 ~~the registration has not been granted for any reason~~) provide  
11 required documentation within reasonable time limits established by  
12 the department, and if the applicant does not do so, the applicant  
13 must stop working.

14 (b) The applicant may not provide unsupervised counseling prior  
15 to completion of a criminal background check performed by either the  
16 employer or the secretary. For purposes of this subsection,  
17 "unsupervised" means the supervisor is not physically present at the  
18 location where the counseling occurs.

19 (2) Agency affiliated counselors shall notify the department if  
20 they are either no longer employed by the agency identified on their  
21 application or are now employed with another agency, or both. Agency  
22 affiliated counselors may not engage in the practice of counseling  
23 unless they are currently affiliated with an agency.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department of health shall conduct a  
25 sunrise review under chapter 18.120 RCW to evaluate the need for  
26 creation of a bachelor's level behavioral health professional  
27 credential which includes competencies related to the treatment of  
28 both substance use and mental health disorders appropriate to the  
29 bachelor's level of education, allows for reimbursement of services  
30 in all appropriate settings where persons with behavioral health  
31 disorders are treated, and is designed to facilitate work in  
32 conjunction with master's level clinicians in a fashion which enables  
33 all professionals to work at the top of their scope of license.

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