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**SENATE BILL 5440**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Jayapal, Becker, and McAuliffe; by request of Department of Health

AN ACT Relating to scope of practice for certified counselors and advisers; and amending RCW 18.19.020 and 18.19.200.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 18.19.020 and 2011 c 86 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Agency" means (a) an agency or facility operated, licensed, or certified by the state of Washington; (b) a federally recognized Indian tribe located within the state; or (c) a county.

(2) "Agency affiliated counselor" means a person registered under this chapter who is engaged in counseling and employed by an agency. "Agency affiliated counselor" includes juvenile probation counselors who are employees of the juvenile court under RCW 13.04.035 and 13.04.040 and juvenile court employees providing functional family therapy, aggression replacement training, or other evidence-based programs approved by the juvenile rehabilitation administration of the department of social and health services.

(3) "Certified adviser" means a person certified under this chapter who ((~~is~~))may be engaged in private practice counseling to the extent authorized in RCW 18.19.200.

(4) "Certified counselor" means a person certified under this chapter who ((~~is~~))may be engaged in private practice counseling to the extent authorized in RCW 18.19.200.

(5) "Client" means an individual who receives or participates in counseling or group counseling.

(6) "Counseling" means employing any therapeutic techniques, including but not limited to social work, mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy, and hypnotherapy, for a fee that offer, assist, or attempt to assist an individual or individuals in the amelioration or adjustment of mental, emotional, or behavioral problems, and includes therapeutic techniques to achieve sensitivity and awareness of self and others and the development of human potential. For the purposes of this chapter, nothing may be construed to imply that the practice of hypnotherapy is necessarily limited to counseling.

(7) "Counselor" means an individual, practitioner, therapist, or analyst who engages in the practice of counseling to the public for a fee, including for the purposes of this chapter, hypnotherapists.

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

(9) "Hypnotherapist" means a person registered under this chapter who is practicing hypnosis as a modality.

(10) "Private practice counseling" means the practice of counseling by a certified counselor or certified adviser in a setting other than an agency and as specified in RCW 18.19.200.

(11) "Psychotherapy" means the practice of counseling using diagnosis of mental disorders ((~~according to the fourth edition of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, published in 1994,~~)) and the development of treatment plans for counseling based on diagnosis of mental disorders in accordance with established practice standards.

(12) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department or the secretary's designee.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.19.200 and 2008 c 135 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

A person may not practice as a certified counselor or certified adviser unless he or she is certified under this chapter. The scope of practice of certified counselors and certified advisers consists exclusively of the following:

(1) Risk assessment and appropriate screening of the client's ((~~level of functional impairment using the global assessment of functioning as described in the fourth edition of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, published in 1994~~))mental, emotional, or behavioral problems according to the definition of mild, moderate, and severe mental, emotional, or behavioral problems as defined by the secretary in rule. Recognition of ((~~a mental or physical disorder or a global assessment of functioning score of sixty or less~~))severe mental, emotional, or behavioral problems requires that the certified counselor or certified adviser refer the client to a ((~~physician, osteopathic physician, psychiatric registered nurse practitioner, or~~)) licensed ((~~mental~~)) health care practitioner, as defined by the secretary in rule, for diagnosis and treatment;

(2) Certified counselors and certified advisers may counsel and guide a client in adjusting to life situations, developing new skills, and making desired changes, in accordance with the theories and techniques of a specific counseling method and established practice standards, if the client has ((~~a global assessment of functioning score greater than sixty~~))absent to mild mental, emotional, or behavioral problems;

(3) Certified counselors may counsel and guide a client in adjusting to life situations, developing new skills, and making desired changes if the client has ((~~a global assessment of functioning score of sixty or less if:~~))moderate mental, emotional, or behavioral problems;

((~~(a) The~~))(4) A certified counselor may not be a sole treatment provider for a client with severe mental, emotional, or behavioral problems. When a client has been referred to the certified counselor by a ((~~physician, osteopathic physician, psychiatric registered nurse practitioner, or~~)) licensed ((~~mental~~)) health care practitioner, as defined by the secretary in rule, and care is provided as part of a plan of treatment developed by the referring practitioner ((~~who is actively treating the client.~~)), the certified counselor may work with the client and must adhere to any conditions related to the certified counselor's role as specified in the plan of care((~~; or~~

~~(b) The certified counselor referred the client to seek diagnosis and treatment from a physician, osteopathic physician, psychiatric registered nurse practitioner, or licensed mental health practitioner, as defined by the secretary, and the client refused, in writing, to seek treatment from the other provider. The certified counselor may provide services to the client consistent with a treatment plan developed by the certified counselor and the consultant or supervisor with whom the certified counselor has a written consultation or supervisory agreement. A certified counselor shall not be a sole treatment provider for a client with a global assessment of functioning score of less than fifty~~)).

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