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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1724**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Postsecondary Education & Workforce (originally sponsored by Representatives Bateman, Macri, Taylor, Berry, Tharinger, Slatter, Callan, Leavitt, Reed, and Shavers)

AN ACT Relating to increasing the trained behavioral health workforce; amending RCW 18.83.170, 18.205.140, 18.225.090, and 18.225.140; adding a new section to chapter 28C.18 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.130 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.225 RCW; and declaring an emergency.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 18.83.170 and 2019 c 351 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Upon compliance with administrative procedures, administrative requirements, and fees determined under RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280, the board may grant a license, without oral examination, to any applicant who has not previously failed any examination held by the board of psychology of the state of Washington and furnishes evidence satisfactory to the board that the applicant:

(a) Holds a doctoral degree with primary emphasis on psychology from an accredited college or university; and

(b)(i) Is licensed or certified to practice psychology in another state or country in which the requirements for such licensing or certification are, in the judgment of the board, essentially equivalent to those required by this chapter and the rules and regulations of the board. Such individuals must have been licensed or certified in another state for a period of at least two years; or

(ii) Is a diplomate in good standing of the American Board of Examiners in Professional Psychology; or

(iii) Is a member of a professional organization and holds a certificate deemed by the board to meet standards equivalent to this chapter.

(2)(a)(i) The department shall establish a reciprocity program for applicants for licensure as a psychologist in Washington.

(ii) The reciprocity program applies to applicants for a license as a psychologist who:

(A) Hold or have held within the past twelve months a credential in good standing from another state or territory of the United States which has a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for licensed psychologists as established under this chapter; and

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

(b) The department shall issue a probationary license to an applicant who meets the requirements of (a)(ii) of this subsection. The department must determine what deficiencies, if any, exist between the education and experience requirements of the other state's credential and, after consideration of the experience and capabilities of the applicant, determine whether it is appropriate to require the applicant to complete additional education or experience requirements to maintain the probationary license and, within a reasonable time period, transition to a full license. ((~~A person who holds a probationary license may only practice as a psychologist in a licensed or certified service provider, as defined in RCW 71.24.025.~~)) The department may place a reasonable time limit on a probationary license and may, if appropriate, require the applicant to pass a jurisprudential examination.

(c) The department must maintain and publish a list of credentials in other states and territories that the department has determined to have a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for licensed psychologists as established under this chapter. The department shall prioritize identifying and publishing the department's determination for the five states or territories that have historically had the most applicants for reciprocity under subsection (1) of this section with a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for licensed psychologists as established under this chapter.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.205.140 and 2019 c 351 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An applicant holding a credential in another state may be certified 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.

(2)(a)(i) The department shall establish a reciprocity program for applicants for certification as a ((~~chemical dependency~~)) substance use disorder professional in Washington.

(ii) The reciprocity program applies to applicants for certification as a ((~~chemical dependency~~)) substance use disorder professional who:

(A) Hold or have held within the past twelve months a credential in good standing from another state or territory of the United States which has a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for certified ((~~chemical dependency~~)) substance use disorder professionals as established under this chapter; and

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

(b) The department shall issue a probationary certificate to an applicant who meets the requirements of (a)(ii) of this subsection. The department must determine what deficiencies, if any, exist between the education and experience requirements of the other state's credential and, after consideration of the experience and capabilities of the applicant, determine whether it is appropriate to require the applicant to complete additional education or experience requirements to maintain the probationary certificate and, within a reasonable time period, transition to a full certificate. ((~~A person who holds a probationary certificate may only practice as a chemical dependency professional in a licensed or certified service provider, as defined in RCW 71.24.025.~~)) The department may place a reasonable time limit on a probationary certificate and may, if appropriate, require the applicant to pass a jurisprudential examination.

(c) The department must maintain and publish a list of credentials in other states and territories that the department has determined to have a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for certified ((~~chemical dependency~~)) substance use disorder professionals as established under this chapter. The department shall prioritize identifying and publishing the department's determination for the five states or territories that have historically had the most applicants for reciprocity under subsection (1) of this section with a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for certified ((~~chemical dependency~~)) substance use disorder professionals as established under this chapter.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.225.090 and 2021 c 21 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The secretary shall issue a license to any applicant who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the secretary that the applicant meets the following education and experience requirements for the applicant's practice area.

(a) Licensed social work classifications:

(i) Licensed advanced social worker:

(A) Graduation from a master's ((~~or doctorate~~)) social work educational program accredited by the council on social work education or a social work doctorate program at a university accredited by a recognized accrediting organization, and approved by the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

(B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

(C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of ((~~three thousand two hundred~~)) 3,000 hours with supervision by an approved supervisor who has been licensed for at least two years. Of those supervised hours:

(I) At least ((~~ninety~~)) 90 hours must include direct supervision as specified in this subsection by a licensed independent clinical social worker, a licensed advanced social worker, or an equally qualified licensed mental health professional. Of those hours of directly supervised experience((~~:~~

~~(1) At least fifty hours must include supervision by a licensed advanced social worker or licensed independent clinical social worker; the other forty hours may be supervised by an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and~~

~~(2) At~~)) at least ((~~forty~~)) 40 hours must be in one-to-one supervision and fifty hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group supervision; and

(II) ((~~Eight hundred~~)) 800 hours must be in direct client contact; and

(D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of ((~~thirty-six~~)) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

(ii) Licensed independent clinical social worker:

(A) Graduation from a master's ((~~or doctorate~~)) level social work educational program accredited by the council on social work education or a social work doctorate program at a university accredited by a recognized accrediting organization, and approved by the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

(B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

(C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of ((~~four thousand~~)) 3,000 hours of experience, over a period of not less than ((~~three~~)) two years, with supervision by an approved supervisor who has been licensed for at least two years and, as specified in this subsection, may be either a licensed independent clinical social worker who has had at least one year of experience in supervising the clinical social work of others or an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. Of those supervised hours:

(I) At least ((~~one thousand~~)) 1,000 hours must be direct client contact; and

(II) Hours of direct supervision must include:

(1) At least ((~~one hundred thirty~~)) 100 hours by a licensed mental health practitioner;

(2) At least ((~~seventy~~)) 70 hours of supervision with a licensed independent clinical social worker meeting the qualifications under this subsection (1)(a)(ii)(C); the ((~~other sixty~~)) remaining hours may be supervised by an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and

(3) At least ((~~sixty~~)) 60 hours must be in one-to-one supervision and ((~~seventy~~)) the remaining hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group supervision; and

(D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of ((~~thirty-six~~)) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

(b) Licensed mental health counselor:

(i) Graduation from a master's or doctoral level educational program in mental health counseling or a related discipline from a college or university approved by the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

(ii) Successful completion of an approved examination;

(iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of ((~~thirty-six~~)) 36 months full-time counseling or ((~~three thousand~~)) 3,000 hours of postgraduate mental health counseling under the supervision of a qualified licensed mental health counselor or equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner, in an approved setting. The three thousand hours of required experience includes a minimum of ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 hours spent in immediate supervision with the qualified licensed mental health counselor, and includes a minimum of ((~~one thousand two hundred~~)) 1,200 hours of direct counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups; and

(iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of ((~~thirty-six~~)) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

(c) Licensed marriage and family therapist:

(i) Graduation from a master's degree or doctoral degree educational program in marriage and family therapy or graduation from an educational program in an allied field equivalent to a master's degree or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy approved by the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

(ii) Successful passage of an approved examination;

(iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of ((~~two calendar years of full-time~~)) 3,000 hours of marriage and family therapy. Of the total supervision, ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 hours must be with a licensed marriage and family therapist with at least five years' clinical experience; the other ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. Total experience requirements include:

(A) ((~~A minimum of three thousand hours of experience, one thousand~~)) 1,000 hours of ((~~which must be~~)) direct client contact; at least ((~~five hundred~~)) 500 hours must be gained in diagnosing and treating couples and families; plus

(B) At least ((~~two hundred~~)) 200 hours of qualified supervision with a supervisor. At least ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 of the ((~~two hundred~~)) 200 hours must be one-on-one supervision, and the remaining hours may be in one-on-one or group supervision.

Applicants who have completed a master's program accredited by the commission on accreditation for marriage and family therapy education of the American association for marriage and family therapy may be credited with ((~~five hundred~~)) 500 hours of direct client contact and ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 hours of formal meetings with an approved supervisor; and

(iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of ((~~thirty-six~~)) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

(2) The department shall establish by rule what constitutes adequate proof of meeting the criteria. Only rules in effect on the date of submission of a completed application of an associate for her or his license shall apply. If the rules change after a completed application is submitted but before a license is issued, the new rules shall not be reason to deny the application.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 18.225.140 and 2019 c 351 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An applicant holding a credential in another state may be licensed to practice in this state without examination if the secretary determines that the other state's credentialing standards are substantially equivalent to the licensing standards in this state.

(2)(a)(i) The department shall establish a reciprocity program for applicants for licensure as an advanced social worker, an independent clinical social worker, a mental health counselor, or a marriage and family therapist in Washington.

(ii) The reciprocity program applies to applicants for a license as an advanced social worker, an independent clinical social worker, a mental health counselor, or a marriage and family therapist who:

(A) Hold or have held within the past ((~~twelve~~)) 12 months a credential in good standing from another state or territory of the United States which has a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for the corresponding license as established under this chapter; and

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

(b) The department shall issue a probationary license to an applicant who meets the requirements of (a)(ii) of this subsection. The department must determine what deficiencies, if any, exist between the education and experience requirements of the other state's credential and, after consideration of the experience and capabilities of the applicant, determine whether it is appropriate to require the applicant to complete additional education or experience requirements to maintain the probationary license and, within a reasonable time period, transition to a full license. ((~~A person who holds a probationary license may only practice in the relevant profession in a licensed or certified service provider, as defined in RCW 71.24.025.~~)) The department may place a reasonable time limit on a probationary license and may, if appropriate, require the applicant to pass a jurisprudential examination.

(c) The department must maintain and publish a list of credentials in other states and territories that the department has determined to have a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for licensed advanced social workers, independent clinical social workers, mental health counselors, or marriage and family therapists as established under this chapter. The department shall prioritize identifying and publishing the department's determination for the five states or territories that have historically had the most applicants for reciprocity under subsection (1) of this section with a scope of practice that is substantially equivalent to or greater than the scope of practice for licensed advanced social workers, independent clinical social workers, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) By December 1, 2023, the board shall examine licensure requirements for the following professions and make recommendations to the legislature and relevant agencies, boards, and commissions for changes to statutes and rules that would remove barriers to entering and remaining in the health care workforce:

(a) Advanced social workers and independent clinical social workers licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW;

(b) Marriage and family therapists licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW;

(c) Mental health counselors licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW;

(d) Substance use disorder professionals certified under chapter 18.205 RCW; and

(e) Psychologists licensed under chapter 18.83 RCW.

(2) The board may provide some or all of its recommendations before December 1, 2023.

(3) The board may contract with a private entity or third-party consultant to assist the board in developing its recommendations.

(4) The licensure requirements to be examined by the board shall include examinations, continuing education requirements, administrative requirements for license application and renewal, English language proficiency requirements, and supervised experience requirements, including supervisor requirements and costs associated with completing supervised experience requirements.

(5) When making its recommendations, the board shall at a minimum consider the following:

(a) The availability of peer-reviewed research and other evidence, including requirements in other states, indicating the necessity of specific licensure requirements for ensuring that behavioral health professionals are prepared to practice with reasonable skill and safety;

(b) Changes that would facilitate licensure of qualified, out-of-state and international applicants to promote reciprocity, including the adoption of applicable interstate compacts;

(c) Changes that would promote greater consistency across licensure requirements for professions licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW and allow for applicants' prior professional experience within relevant fields to be counted towards supervised experience requirements established under chapter 18.225 RCW, including the extent to which an applicant may use prior professional experience gained before graduation from a master's or doctoral level educational program to satisfy the applicant's supervised experience requirement;

(d) Technical assistance programs, such as navigators or dedicated customer service lines, to facilitate the completion of licensing applications;

(e) In consultation with the examining board of psychology and a statewide organization representing licensed psychologists, the creation of an associate-level license for psychologists;

(f) Whether agency affiliated counselors should be allowed to practice in federally qualified health centers; and

(g) Any rules that pose excessive administrative requirements for application or renewal or that place a disproportionate burden on applicants from disadvantaged communities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 18.130 RCW to read as follows:

(1) By July 1, 2024, all disciplining authorities that receive recommendations from the workforce training and education coordinating board pursuant to section 5 of this act must adopt rules to implement the recommendations.

(2) Pursuant to RCW 34.05.350, the legislature finds that the rules adopted under this section are necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare and observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest. The disciplining authorities shall, therefore, adopt the rules required under this section as emergency rules.

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

(1)(a) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, by October 1, 2023, the department shall develop a program to facilitate placement of associates with clinical supervision services. The program must include a database of license holders with the required qualifications who are willing to serve as approved supervisors and agencies or facilities that offer supervision services through their facilities to associates seeking to satisfy supervised experience requirements under RCW 18.225.090.

(b) The department shall adopt, by rule, minimum qualifications for supervisors or facilities to be included in the database and minimum standards for adequate supervision of associates. The department may not include in the database any person who, or facility that, does not meet the minimum qualifications. The department shall periodically audit the list to remove persons who, or facilities that, no longer meet the minimum qualifications or fail to meet the minimum standards.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall establish a stipend program to defray the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by associates completing supervised experience requirements under RCW 18.225.090.

(a) Out-of-pocket expenses eligible for defrayment under this section include costs incurred in order to obtain supervised experience, such as fees or charges imposed by the individual or entity providing supervision, and any other expenses deemed appropriate by the department.

(b) Associates participating in the stipend program established in this section shall document their out-of-pocket expenses in a manner specified by the department.

(c) When adopting the stipend program, the department shall consider defraying out-of-pocket expenses associated with unpaid internships that are part of an applicant's educational program.

(d) The department shall establish the stipend program no later than July 1, 2024.

(e) The department may adopt any rules necessary to implement this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

**--- END ---**