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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2291**

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**State of Washington**

**53rd Legislature**

**1994 Regular Session**

**By** House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Dellwo, Dyer, Ballasiotes, R. Johnson, Thibaudeau, L. Johnson and Pruitt)

Read first time 02/04/94.

1 AN ACT Relating to the certification of mental health counselors;  
2 and amending RCW 18.19.120.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.19.120 and 1991 c 3 s 27 are each amended to read  
5 as follows:

6 (1) The department shall issue a certified mental health counselor  
7 certificate to any applicant meeting the following requirements:

8 (a) A master's or doctoral degree in mental health counseling ((or  
9 a related field from an approved school, or completion of at least  
10 thirty graduate semester hours or forty-five graduate quarter hours in  
11 the field of mental health counseling or the substantial equivalent in  
12 both subject content and extent of training);

13 (b) Postgraduate supervised mental health counseling practice that  
14 meets standards established by the secretary;

15 (c) Qualification by an examination, submission of all necessary  
16 documents, and payment of required fees; and

17 (d) Twenty-four months of postgraduate professional experience  
18 working in a mental health counseling setting that meets the  
19 requirements established by the secretary.

1       ~~(2) No applicant may come before the secretary for examination~~  
2 ~~without the initial educational and supervisory credentials as required~~  
3 ~~by this chapter, except that applicants completing a master's or~~  
4 ~~doctoral degree program in mental health counseling or a related field~~  
5 ~~from an approved graduate school before or within eighteen months of~~  
6 ~~July 26, 1987, may qualify for the examination.~~

7       ~~(3) For one year beginning on July 26, 1987, a person may apply for~~  
8 ~~certification without examination. However, if the applicant's~~  
9 ~~credentials are not adequate to establish competence to the secretary's~~  
10 ~~satisfaction, the secretary may require an examination of the applicant~~  
11 ~~during the initial certification period. For the initial certification~~  
12 ~~period, an applicant shall:~~

13       ~~(a) Submit a completed application as required by the secretary,~~  
14 ~~who may require that the statements on the application be made under~~  
15 ~~oath, accompanied by the application fee set by the secretary in~~  
16 ~~accordance with RCW 43.70.250;~~

17       ~~(b) Have a master's or doctoral degree in counseling or a related~~  
18 ~~field from an approved school; and~~

19       ~~(c) Have submitted a completed application as required by the~~  
20 ~~secretary accompanied by the application fee set by the secretary and~~  
21 ~~a request for waiver from the requirements of (b) of this subsection,~~  
22 ~~with documentation to show that the applicant has alternative training~~  
23 ~~and experience equivalent to formal education and supervised experience~~  
24 ~~required for certification.)) or a behavioral science master's or~~  
25 ~~doctoral degree in a related field with the program equivalency as~~  
26 ~~determined by rule by the department based on nationally recognized~~  
27 ~~standards; and~~

28       ~~(b) Two years of postgraduate practice of counseling under the~~  
29 ~~supervision of a qualified mental health counselor-supervisor or other~~  
30 ~~mental health professional deemed appropriate by the secretary that may~~  
31 ~~be accumulated concurrently with completion of the required program~~  
32 ~~equivalency; and~~

33       ~~(c) Qualification by an examination, submission of all necessary~~  
34 ~~documents, and payment of required fees.~~

35       ~~((4))~~ (2) Certified mental health counseling practice is that  
36 aspect of counseling that involves the ~~((rendering to individuals,~~  
37 ~~groups, organizations, corporations, institutions, government agencies,~~  
38 ~~or the general public a mental health counseling service emphasizing a~~  
39 ~~wellness model rather than an illness model in the application of~~

1 ~~therapeutic principles, methods, or procedures of mental health~~  
2 ~~counseling to assist the client in achieving effective personal,~~  
3 ~~organizational, institutional, social, educational, and vocational~~  
4 ~~development and adjustment and to assist the client in achieving~~  
5 ~~independence and autonomy in the helping relationship)) provision of~~  
6 professional mental health counseling services to individuals, couples,  
7 and families, singly or in groups, whether the services are offered  
8 directly to the general public or through organizations, either public  
9 or private, for a fee, monetary or otherwise. "Certified mental health  
10 counseling" means the application of principles of human development,  
11 learning theory, group dynamics, and etiology of mental illness and  
12 dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families, groups, and  
13 organizations, for the purpose of treating mental disorders and  
14 promoting optimal mental health and functionality. Certified mental  
15 health counseling also includes, but is not limited to, the assessment,  
16 diagnosis, and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, educational  
17 techniques developed to prevent such disorders, as well as the  
18 application of a wellness model of mental health.

19 (3) The secretary may establish rules governing mandatory  
20 continuing education requirements for a certified mental health  
21 counselor applying for renewal.

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