

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2474

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 28, 2008

Title: An act relating to supervised experience requirements for social worker licenses.

Brief Description: Modifying supervised experience requirements for social worker licenses.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Wood, Morrell, Barlow and Green).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/26/08, 2/28/08 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Marr and McAuliffe.

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: Until 2001, counselors, including social workers and mental health counselors, were registered under the same law. In 2001 licensed social workers, licensed mental health counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists became regulated by the Department of Health (DOH) under a separate law. Licensing requirements for all three professions include specific education, examination, and supervised experience requirements. Licensed social workers may qualify for licensure in one of two categories: licensed advanced social workers or licensed independent clinical social workers. Each category requires an applicant to meet specified supervised experience requirements.

The supervised experience requirement for licensed social workers is specified in statute. For licensed advanced social workers, the experience requirements include, among other things: a minimum of 3,200 hours of experience; ninety hours supervised by a licensed independent clinical social worker or a licensed advanced social worker who has been licensed at least two years; of those hours, 50 hours of direct supervision by a licensed independent clinical social worker or a licensed advanced social worker; the other 40 hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and at least 800 hours in direct client contact.

The supervised experience requirement for licensed independent clinical social workers, includes, among other things: a minimum of 4,000 hours of experience, with 1,000 hours of direct client contact supervised by a licensed independent clinical social worker who has been

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licensed at least five years and has had at least one year of clinical practice supervision experience; at least 130 hours supervised by a licensed mental health practitioner; and of the total supervision, 70 hours with an independent clinical social worker meeting the statutory experience requirements; the other 60 hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner.

Under DOH rules, the required experience for licensed social workers is supervised by an approved supervisor. An approved supervisor may be a licensed independent clinical social worker, a licensed advanced social worker (for licensed advanced social workers only), or an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. An "equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner" means a licensed mental health counselor, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed psychologist, a licensed physician practicing as a psychiatrist, or a licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Approved supervisors must meet certain requirements in the rules, including holding an unrestricted license for at least two years, completing certain supervisor training, and having, for licensed advanced social workers only, two years of clinical experience postlicensure or, for licensed independent clinical social workers only, five years of clinical experience postlicensure.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): For both categories of licensed social workers, some of the required supervised experience may be provided by an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. All of the licensed supervisors must be approved supervisors. For both categories, an approved supervisor must be licensed for at least two years (which reduces the five-year licensure requirement to two years when licensed independent clinical social worker applicants are supervised).

Additional changes are made to clarify the supervised experience requirements for licensed social workers and to organize these requirements in a more consistent format.

These changes take effect retroactively to July 22, 2003.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The date of the retroactive effect is changed from July 22, 2001 to July 22, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: This bill represents a technical cleanup. It was never intended that an approved supervisor of a clinical social worker licensing applicant would have to have five years experience while only requiring two years experience for other social workers. They were always meant to be the same and this bill would put them on equal footing. The retroactivity is necessary to put everyone on the same footing. The DOH has no issue with the retroactivity section.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Lonnie Johns-Brown, Washington State Society for Clinical Social Workers; Seth Dawson, National Association of Social Workers.