
Health Care & Wellness Committee

ESSB 5485

Brief Description: Licensing of music therapists.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Darnelle, Cleveland and Conway).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Establishes music therapists as a new health profession licensed by the Secretary of Health.
- Creates the Music Therapy Advisory Committee to advise the Secretary of Health on matters related to music therapy and educating the public about music therapy.

Hearing Date: 3/20/19

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Music therapists use musical interventions to achieve therapeutic goals by assessing an individual's functioning through response to music; designing music interventions and therapy sessions based on treatment goals, objectives and the individual's needs; and evaluating and documenting treatment outcomes. Music therapists may practice as part of an interdisciplinary team that includes medical, mental health, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or educational professionals. Music therapists may work in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitative facilities, mental health centers, residential and day facilities, substance use disorder treatment facilities, correctional facilities, schools, or in private practice. Music therapists are not regulated in Washington.

In December 2012, the Department of Health issued a sunrise review related to a proposal to certify music therapists. In the review, the Department recognized the therapeutic benefit of music to address the cognitive, emotional, physical, social, or functional needs of clients, but found that the proposal did not meet the sunrise criteria to support certification.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

Music therapists are created as a new health profession to be regulated by the Secretary of Health (Secretary). Beginning January 1, 2021, to practice music therapy, one must hold a license issued by the Secretary. To receive a license to practice music therapy, an applicant must pay a licensing fee; be at least 18 years old; hold a bachelor's degree or higher in music therapy from a program approved by the American Music Therapy Association; have completed a minimum of 1,200 hours of clinical training, including at least 180 hours in preinternship experience and at least 900 hours in internship experience; and pass an examination for board certification offered by the Certification Board for Music Therapists. In addition, if the applicant is a licensed music therapist in another jurisdiction, the applicant must be in good standing in that jurisdiction. Alternatively, an applicant may receive a license if the applicant is licensed in good standing in another jurisdiction where the qualifications are equal to or greater than those in Washington.

"Music therapy" is defined as the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals for people within a therapeutic relationship. Music therapy interventions may include music improvisation, receptive music listening, song writing, lyric discussion, music and imagery, singing, music performance, learning through music, music combined with other arts, music-assisted relaxation, music-based patient education, electronic music technology, adapted music intervention, and movement to music. Music therapy may include:

- accepting referrals for music therapy services;
- conducting a music therapy assessment of a client to determine if treatment is indicated;
- developing an individualized music therapy treatment plan that is based on the music therapy assessment;
- implementing an individualized music therapy treatment plan;
- evaluating the client's response to music therapy and the music therapy treatment plan;
- developing a plan for determining when music therapy services are no longer needed;
- minimizing barriers to provide services in the least restrictive environment;
- collaborating with and educating the client and the family on the needs of the client that are being addressed in music therapy; and
- determining the appropriate actions for each specific clinical setting.

Beginning January 1, 2021, a person may not use the title "music therapist" if the person is not licensed as a music therapist. Exemptions from licensing requirements are established for: (1) persons licensed in another profession that uses music incidental to the practice of that profession; (2) persons whose training and certification attest to the person's preparation and ability to practice the person's certified profession; (3) the practice of music therapy by students enrolled in an accredited music therapy program; or (4) persons who practice music therapy under the supervision of a licensed music therapist.

Music therapists are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

The Music Therapy Advisory Committee (Committee) is established. The Secretary shall appoint the five members of the Committee. The Committee is comprised of three music therapists who practice in Washington, one licensed health care provider other than a music therapist, and a person who is or has been in a therapeutic relationship with a music therapist. The Committee may facilitate the development of materials to educate the public concerning

music therapist licensure, the benefits of music therapy, and use of music therapy by individuals and in facilities or institutional settings. The Committee may facilitate the statewide dissemination of information between music therapists the American Music Therapy Association, the Certification Board for Music Therapists, and the Secretary. The Committee shall analyze disciplinary actions taken, appeals and denials, or revocations of licenses at least annually. The Secretary must consult with the Committee prior to setting or changing fees and seek its advice on issues related to music therapy.

Statements of legislative intent are made related to recognizing that music therapy affects public health, safety, and welfare; assuring professional conduct by music therapists; guaranteeing the availability of music therapy services by qualified professionals; and protecting the public from the practice of music therapy by unqualified individuals.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.