

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1063

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to allowing additional renewals for behavioral health professional trainee and associate credentials.

Brief Description: Allowing additional renewals for behavioral health professional trainee and associate credentials.

Sponsors: Representatives Harris, Cody, Bateman, Kloba, Ortiz-Self, Leavitt, Slatter, Tharinger, Callan, Riccelli, Macri, Rule, Davis and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/14/21, 1/20/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides additional credential renewals for substance use disorder professional trainees and certain behavioral health associates during periods of Governor-declared emergencies.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Davis, Harris, Macri, Maycumber, Riccelli, Rude, Simmons, Stonier, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Staff: Theiline Cramer (786-7291) and Christopher Blake (786-7392).

Background:

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

Trainee certifications and associate licenses for certain behavioral health professions allow applicants to meet the professional licensure requirements for a full certification or license in a particular profession. These applicants include:

- substance use disorder professional trainees (SUDPT); and
- social work, mental health counseling, and marriage and family therapy associate licensees.

A Substance Use Disorder Professional Trainee.

An SUDPT is an individual working to satisfy the requirements for full certification as a substance use disorder professional. The experience hours required for substance use disorder professional certification are carried out under approved supervision. The number of professional experience hours needed for certification as a substance use disorder professional varies, depending on the type of formative education of the trainee. To qualify as an SUDPT, the person:

- must include written documentation demonstrating enrollment in an approved school where the person is gaining the experience required to receive a substance use disorder professional credential;
- must submit evidence of completion of four hours of acquired immune deficiency syndrome education; and
- must submit a signed declaration with their annual renewal that states the person is enrolled in an approved education program, or has completed the educational requirements, and is obtaining the experience requirements for a substance use disorder professional credential.

An SUDPT certificate may be renewed no more than four times.

An Associate License.

An associate license is available to a person gaining the supervised experience necessary to become a:

- licensed independent clinical social worker;
- licensed advanced social worker;
- licensed mental health counselor; or
- licensed marriage and family therapist.

The number of obligatory experience hours and other requirements varies, depending upon the specific behavioral health license sought.

An associate license may be renewed no more than six times, provided the applicant for renewal has successfully completed 18 hours of continuing education in the preceding year. Upon the second renewal, at least six of the continuing education hours in the preceding two years must be in professional ethics.

Definition of Governor-Declared Emergency.

A Governor's proclamation of a state of emergency is effective upon the Governor's signature, and the appropriate filing and public notice procedure. A proclamation of a state of emergency allows the Governor to prescribe certain actions or prohibitions, such as setting a period of curfew or prohibiting the gathering of persons in public or private areas. The Governor may terminate a state of emergency proclamation when order has been restored in the area affected.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of Health is authorized to grant a waiver for additional credential renewals due to barriers to testing or training resulting from a Governor-declared emergency for the following credentials:

- substance use disorder professional trainees certifications; and
 - associate licenses for social workers, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill addresses a constituent's difficult experience during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 crisis, resulting in her inability to finish her licensure hours. This bill would provide a grace period during times of a pandemic or other Governor- declared emergency, providing more time to persons that are looking to complete their hours.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Harris, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.