AN ACT Relating to respiratory care practitioners; amending RCW 18.89.010, 18.89.020, 18.89.040, 18.89.050, and 18.89.090; reenacting and amending RCW 18.89.020; providing effective dates; and providing an expiration date.

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

Sec. 1. RCW 18.89.010 and 1997 c 334 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The legislature finds that in order to safeguard life, health, and to promote public welfare, a person practicing or offering to practice respiratory care as a respiratory care practitioner in this state shall be required to submit evidence that he or she is qualified to practice, and shall be licensed as provided. The settings for these services may include, health facilities licensed in this state, clinics, home care, home health agencies, physicians' offices, public or community health services, and services provided through telemedicine to patients in these settings. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to require that individual or group policies or contracts of an insurance carrier, health care service contractor, or health maintenance organization provide benefits or coverage for services and supplies provided by a person certified under this chapter.
Sec. 2. RCW 18.89.020 and 2011 c 235 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Department" means the department of health.

(2) "Direct supervision" means a health care practitioner is continuously on-site and physically present in the treatment operatory while the procedures are performed by the respiratory care practitioner.

(3) "Health care practitioner" means:

(a) A physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW;

(b) An osteopathic physician or surgeon licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW; or

(c) Acting within the scope of their respective licensure, a podiatric physician and surgeon licensed under chapter 18.22 RCW, an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW, a naturopath licensed under chapter 18.36A RCW, a physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW, or an osteopathic physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.57A RCW.

(4) "Respiratory care practitioner" means an individual licensed under this chapter.

(5) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.

Sec. 3. RCW 18.89.020 and 2020 c 80 s 20 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Department" means the department of health.

(2) "Direct supervision" means a health care practitioner is continuously on-site and physically present in the treatment operatory while the procedures are performed by the respiratory care practitioner.

(3) "Health care practitioner" means:

(a) A physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW;

(b) An osteopathic physician or surgeon licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW; or

(c) Acting within the scope of their respective licensure, a podiatric physician and surgeon licensed under chapter 18.22 RCW, an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW.
RCW, a naturopath licensed under chapter 18.36A RCW, or a physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW.

((3)) (4) "Respiratory care practitioner" means an individual licensed under this chapter.

((4)) (5) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.

Sec. 4. RCW 18.89.040 and 2011 c 235 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A respiratory care practitioner licensed under this chapter is employed in the treatment, management, diagnostic testing, rehabilitation, disease prevention, and care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities which affect the cardiopulmonary system and associated aspects of other systems, and is under the direct written, verbal, or telephonic order and under the qualified medical direction of a health care practitioner. The practice of respiratory care includes:

(a) The use and administration of prescribed medical gases, exclusive of general anesthesia, including the administration of nitrous oxide for analgesia under the direct supervision of a health care practitioner;

(b) The use of air and oxygen administering apparatus;

(c) The use of humidification and aerosols;

(d) The administration, to the extent of training, as determined by the secretary, of prescribed pharmacologic agents, including any medications administered via a nebulizer, related to respiratory cardiopulmonary care;

(e) The use of mechanical ventilatory, hyperbaric, and physiological support;

(f) Postural drainage, chest percussion, and vibration;

(g) Bronchopulmonary hygiene;

(h) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation as it pertains to advanced cardiac life support or pediatric advanced life support guidelines;

(i) The maintenance of natural and artificial airways and insertion, without cutting tissues, of artificial airways, as prescribed by a health care practitioner;

(j) Diagnostic and monitoring techniques such as the collection and measurement of cardiorespiratory specimens, volumes, pressures, and flows;
(k) The insertion of devices to draw, analyze, infuse, or monitor pressure in arterial, capillary, or venous blood as prescribed by a health care practitioner; 

(l) Diagnostic monitoring of and therapeutic interventions for desaturation, ventilatory patterns, and related sleep abnormalities to aid the health care practitioner in diagnosis. This subsection does not prohibit any person from performing sleep monitoring tasks as set forth in this subsection under the supervision or direction of a licensed health care provider;

(m) Extracorporeal life support and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation; and

(n) Cardiopulmonary stress testing, including the administration of medications used during cardiopulmonary stress testing.

(2) Nothing in this chapter prohibits or restricts:

(a) The practice of a profession by individuals who are licensed under other laws of this state who are performing services within their authorized scope of practice, that may overlap the services provided by respiratory care practitioners;

(b) The practice of respiratory care by an individual employed by the government of the United States while the individual is engaged in the performance of duties prescribed for him or her by the laws and rules of the United States;

(c) The practice of respiratory care by a person pursuing a supervised course of study leading to a degree or certificate in respiratory care as a part of an accredited and approved educational program, if the person is designated by a title that clearly indicates his or her status as a student or trainee and limited to the extent of demonstrated proficiency of completed curriculum, and under direct supervision;

(d) The use of the title "respiratory care practitioner" by registered nurses authorized under chapter 18.79 RCW; or

(e) The practice without compensation of respiratory care of a family member.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to require that individual or group policies or contracts of an insurance carrier, health care service contractor, or health maintenance organization provide benefits or coverage for services and supplies provided by a person licensed under this chapter.
Sec. 5. RCW 18.89.050 and 2004 c 262 s 13 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) In addition to any other authority provided by law, the secretary may:

(a) Adopt rules, in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW, necessary to implement this chapter;

(b) Set all license, examination, and renewal fees in accordance with RCW 43.70.250;

(c) Establish forms and procedures necessary to administer this chapter;

(d) Issue a license to any applicant who has met the education, training, and examination requirements for licensure;

(e) Hire clerical, administrative, and investigative staff as needed to implement this chapter and hire individuals licensed under this chapter to serve as examiners for any practical examinations;

(f) Approve those schools from which graduation will be accepted as proof of an applicant's eligibility to take the licensure examination, specifically requiring that applicants must have completed an accredited respiratory program with at least a two-year curriculum;

(g) Prepare, grade, and administer, or determine the nature of, and supervise the grading and administration of, examinations for applicants for licensure;

(h) Determine whether alternative methods of training are equivalent to formal education and establish forms, procedures, and criteria for evaluation of an applicant's alternative training to determine the applicant's eligibility to take the examination;

(i) Determine which states have legal credentialing requirements equivalent to those of this state and issue licenses to individuals legally credentialed in those states without examination;

(j) Define and approve any experience requirement for licensure;

(k) Appoint members of the profession to serve in an ad hoc advisory capacity to the secretary in carrying out this chapter. The members will serve for designated times and provide advice on matters specifically identified and requested by the secretary. The members shall be compensated in accordance with RCW 43.03.220 and reimbursed for travel expenses under RCW 43.03.040 and 43.03.060; and

(l) Define training requirements and hospital protocols for respiratory care therapists to administer nitrous oxide.
(2) The provisions of chapter 18.130 RCW shall govern the issuance and denial of licenses, unlicensed practice, and the disciplining of persons licensed under this chapter. The secretary shall be the disciplining authority under this chapter.

Sec. 6. RCW 18.89.090 and 1997 c 334 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The secretary shall issue a license to any applicant who demonstrates to the secretary's satisfaction that the following requirements have been met:
  (a) Graduation from a school approved by the secretary or successful completion of alternate training which meets the criteria established by the secretary;
  (b) ((Successful)) (i) For licenses issued prior to the effective date of this section, successful completion of an examination administered or approved by the secretary.
     (ii) For licenses issued on or after the effective date of this section, successful completion of both an examination administered or approved by the secretary and a clinical simulation examination administered or approved by the secretary. The secretary may deem an applicant in compliance with this subsection (1)(b)(ii) if the applicant possesses an active credential in good standing as a registered respiratory therapist issued by a national organization such as the national board for respiratory care, if one of the requirements for the issuance of the credential is passage of the examinations required by this subsection (1)(b)(ii);
  (c) Successful completion of any experience requirement established by the secretary;
  (d) Good moral character.

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

(2) ((A person who meets the qualifications to be admitted to the examination for licensure as a respiratory care practitioner may practice as a respiratory care practitioner under the supervision of a respiratory care practitioner licensed under this chapter between the date of filing an application for licensure and the announcement of the results of the next succeeding examination for licensure if that person applies for and takes the first examination for which he or she is eligible.)
(3) A person certified as a respiratory care practitioner in good standing on July 1, 1998, who applies within one year of July 1, 1998, may be licensed without having completed the two-year curriculum set forth in RCW 18.89.050(1)(f), and without having to retake an examination under subsection (1)(b) of this section.

(4)) The secretary shall establish by rule what constitutes adequate proof of meeting the criteria.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. Section 2 of this act expires July 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 9. Sections 1, 2, and 4 through 6 of this act take effect January 1, 2022.

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