AN ACT Relating to creating a new health profession for birth doulas; amending RCW 18.130.040; adding a new chapter to Title 18 RCW; and providing an effective date.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

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

(2) "Birth doula" means a person that is a nonmedical birth coach or support person trained to provide physical, emotional, and informational support to women and birthing persons during pregnancy, antepartum, labor, birth, and the postpartum period. Birth doulas advocate for and support women, birthing people, and families to self-advocate by helping them to know their rights and make informed decisions. Birth doulas do not provide medical care.

(3) "Postpartum period" means the 12-month period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy.

(4) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) A birth doula may voluntarily apply for certification from the department under this section.
The department shall issue a certification to any applicant who has met the following requirements:

(a) Submitted a completed application as required by the department;
(b) Satisfactorily completed competencies that meet the requirements established by the secretary;
(c) Has not engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined in RCW 18.130.180;
(d) Is not currently subject to any disciplinary proceedings; and
(e) Paid a certification fee established by the secretary in rule.

The uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, governs the issuance and denial of certifications and the discipline of certified birth doulas under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1) The secretary shall:
(a) In collaboration with community partners who advance equitable access to improve perinatal outcomes and care through holistic services for black and brown communities, adopt rules establishing the competency-based requirements that a birth doula must meet to obtain certification. The rules must establish processes that allow for applicants to meet the competency-based requirements through the following pathways:
(i) Successful completion of training and education programs approved by the secretary; and
(ii) Submission of proof of successful completion of culturally congruent ancestral practices, training, and education that the secretary must review and determine whether the training and education meet the competency-based requirements;
(b) Establish certification and renewal fees, administrative procedures, continuing education, administrative requirements, and forms necessary to implement this chapter in accordance with RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280;
(c) Maintain a record of all applicants and certifications under this chapter; and
(d) Hire clerical, administrative, and investigative staff as needed to implement and administer this chapter.

(2) All fees collected under this chapter must be credited to the health professions account as required under RCW 43.70.320.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. (1) Nothing in this chapter prohibits a person from practicing as a birth doula without obtaining certification under this chapter.

(2) No person may use the title "state-certified birth doula" in connection with the person's name to indicate or imply, directly or indirectly, that the person is a state-certified birth doula without being certified in accordance with this chapter as a birth doula.

Sec. 5. RCW 18.130.040 and 2021 c 179 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) This chapter applies only to the secretary and the boards and commissions having jurisdiction in relation to the professions licensed under the chapters specified in this section. This chapter does not apply to any business or profession not licensed under the chapters specified in this section.

(2)(a) The secretary has authority under this chapter in relation to the following professions:

(i) Dispensing opticians licensed and designated apprentices under chapter 18.34 RCW;
(ii) Midwives licensed under chapter 18.50 RCW;
(iii) Ocularists licensed under chapter 18.55 RCW;
(iv) Massage therapists and businesses licensed under chapter 18.108 RCW;
(v) Dental hygienists licensed under chapter 18.29 RCW;
(vi) Acupuncturists or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioners licensed under chapter 18.06 RCW;
(vii) Radiologic technologists certified and X-ray technicians registered under chapter 18.84 RCW;
(viii) Respiratory care practitioners licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW;
(ix) Hypnotherapists and agency affiliated counselors registered and advisors and counselors certified under chapter 18.19 RCW;
(x) Persons licensed as mental health counselors, mental health counselor associates, marriage and family therapists, marriage and family therapist associates, social workers, social work associates—advanced, and social work associates— independent clinical under chapter 18.225 RCW;
(xi) Persons registered as nursing pool operators under chapter 18.52C RCW;
(xii) Nursing assistants registered or certified or medication assistants endorsed under chapter 18.88A RCW;
(xiii) Dietitians and nutritionists certified under chapter 18.138 RCW;
(xiv) Substance use disorder professionals, substance use disorder professional trainees, or co-occurring disorder specialists certified under chapter 18.205 RCW;
(xv) Sex offender treatment providers and certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers certified under chapter 18.155 RCW;
(xvi) Persons licensed and certified under chapter 18.73 RCW or RCW 18.71.205;
(xvii) Orthotists and prosthetists licensed under chapter 18.200 RCW;
(xviii) Surgical technologists registered under chapter 18.215 RCW;
(xix) Recreational therapists under chapter 18.230 RCW;
(xx) Animal massage therapists certified under chapter 18.240 RCW;
(xxi) Athletic trainers licensed under chapter 18.250 RCW;
(xxii) Home care aides certified under chapter 18.88B RCW;
(xxiii) Genetic counselors licensed under chapter 18.290 RCW;
(xxiv) Reflexologists certified under chapter 18.108 RCW;
(xxv) Medical assistants—certified, medical assistants—hemodialysis technician, medical assistants—phlebotomist, forensic phlebotomist, and medical assistants—registered certified and registered under chapter 18.360 RCW; ((and))
(xxvi) Behavior analysts, assistant behavior analysts, and behavior technicians under chapter 18.380 RCW; and
(xxvii) Birth doulas certified under chapter 18.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 7 of this act).

(b) The boards and commissions having authority under this chapter are as follows:
(i) The podiatric medical board as established in chapter 18.22 RCW;
(ii) The chiropractic quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.25 RCW;
(iii) The dental quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.32 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.32 RCW, licenses and registrations issued under chapter 18.260 RCW, and certifications issued under chapter 18.350 RCW;
(iv) The board of hearing and speech as established in chapter 18.35 RCW;
(v) The board of examiners for nursing home administrators as established in chapter 18.52 RCW;
(vi) The optometry board as established in chapter 18.54 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.53 RCW;
(vii) The board of osteopathic medicine and surgery as established in chapter 18.57 RCW governing licenses issued under chapter 18.57 RCW;
(viii) The pharmacy quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.64 RCW governing licenses issued under chapters 18.64 and 18.64A RCW;
(ix) The Washington medical commission as established in chapter 18.71 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under chapters 18.71 and 18.71A RCW;
(x) The board of physical therapy as established in chapter 18.74 RCW;
(xi) The board of occupational therapy practice as established in chapter 18.59 RCW;
(xii) The nursing care quality assurance commission as established in chapter 18.79 RCW governing licenses and registrations issued under that chapter;
(xiii) The examining board of psychology and its disciplinary committee as established in chapter 18.83 RCW;
(xiv) The veterinary board of governors as established in chapter 18.92 RCW;
(xv) The board of naturopathy established in chapter 18.36A RCW, governing licenses and certifications issued under that chapter; and
(xvi) The board of denturists established in chapter 18.30 RCW.

(3) In addition to the authority to discipline license holders, the disciplining authority has the authority to grant or deny licenses. The disciplining authority may also grant a license subject to conditions.

(4) All disciplining authorities shall adopt procedures to ensure substantially consistent application of this chapter, the uniform disciplinary act, among the disciplining authorities listed in subsection (2) of this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. The secretary may adopt any rules necessary to implement this chapter.
NEW SECTION.  Sec. 7.  Sections 1 through 4 and 6 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 18 RCW.

NEW SECTION.  Sec. 8.  Sections 1 through 5 of this act take effect October 1, 2023.

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