
HOUSE BILL 2261

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Marshall and Barnard

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1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring transparency in credentials and
2 communications between patients and health care professionals;
3 amending RCW 18.130.180, 18.57.031, and 18.71.021; adding new
4 sections to chapter 18.130 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 70.41
5 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.20 RCW; adding a new section
6 to chapter 18.51 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 70.128 RCW;
7 adding a new section to chapter 70.230 RCW; and creating a new
8 section.

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

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

11 (a) The terms and titles used by health care professionals in
12 clinical settings play a critical role in ensuring transparency and
13 trust between patients and their health care professionals.
14 Misunderstandings about health care professionals' credentials can
15 lead to patient confusion, erode trust, and impact the quality of
16 care;

17 (b) All members of the health care team play an important role in
18 patient care, however, the use of the title "doctor" in clinical
19 settings and public communications, without clear clarification, may
20 inadvertently lead patients to believe that these health care

1 professionals have attained a doctor of medicine or doctor of
2 osteopathic medicine degree;

3 (c) Many patients may not fully understand the distinctions
4 between different health care credentials. Studies have shown that
5 promoting clarity in the titles of health care professionals improves
6 patient satisfaction and ensures that individuals are better informed
7 about the qualifications of the professionals treating them and the
8 level of care that can be appropriately provided;

9 (d) Protecting patients from potential misrepresentation is
10 critical to maintaining the integrity of the health care system.
11 Transparency in health care professional titles and communications
12 allows patients to make informed decisions and understand the roles
13 of each member of their care team; and

14 (e) Care delivery has evolved to be more team-based with a focus
15 on patient centered care. Patients need to understand the credentials
16 and qualifications of the health care professionals on their care
17 team.

18 (2) The legislature intends to preserve trust, ensure
19 transparency, and protect patients from unnecessary confusion about
20 the qualifications of their health care professionals.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 18.130
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 (1)(a) License holders who provide health care services except
24 custodial services, must affirmatively communicate and display the
25 license holder's credentials during all patient encounters by wearing
26 an identification badge that is visible and includes the health care
27 provider's name and health care credential, including the initials
28 and title of any health care-related degree that the license holder
29 may have obtained.

30 (b) License holders working in nonpatient care settings and who
31 do not have any direct patient care interactions are not subject to
32 the identification badge requirements in (a) of this subsection.

33 (2) Any advertisement for health care services that names a
34 license holder must identify the type of health care credential held
35 by that license holder, including the initials and title of any
36 health care-related degree that the license holder may have obtained.

37 (3) For the purposes of this section:

38 (a) "Advertisement" means any communication or statement, whether
39 printed, electronic, or oral, that names the license holder in

1 relation to their practice, profession, or institution in which the
2 individual is employed, volunteers, or otherwise provides health care
3 services. The term includes business cards, letterhead, patient
4 brochures, email, internet content, audio and video content, and any
5 other communication or statement used in the course of business.

6 (b) "Health care service" has the same meaning as in RCW
7 48.43.005.

8 **Sec. 3.** RCW 18.130.180 and 2025 c 389 s 4 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 Except as provided in RCW 18.130.450, the following conduct,
11 acts, or conditions constitute unprofessional conduct for any license
12 holder under the jurisdiction of this chapter:

13 (1) The commission of any act involving moral turpitude,
14 dishonesty, or corruption relating to the practice of the person's
15 profession, whether the act constitutes a crime or not. If the act
16 constitutes a crime, conviction in a criminal proceeding is not a
17 condition precedent to disciplinary action. Upon such a conviction,
18 however, the judgment and sentence is conclusive evidence at the
19 ensuing disciplinary hearing of the guilt of the license holder of
20 the crime described in the indictment or information, and of the
21 person's violation of the statute on which it is based. For the
22 purposes of this section, conviction includes all instances in which
23 a plea of guilty or nolo contendere is the basis for the conviction
24 and all proceedings in which the sentence has been deferred or
25 suspended. Nothing in this section abrogates rights guaranteed under
26 chapter 9.96A RCW;

27 (2) Misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact in
28 obtaining a license or in reinstatement thereof;

29 (3) All advertising which is false, fraudulent, or misleading;

30 (4) Incompetence, negligence, or malpractice which results in
31 injury to a patient or which creates an unreasonable risk that a
32 patient may be harmed. The use of a nontraditional treatment by
33 itself shall not constitute unprofessional conduct, provided that it
34 does not result in injury to a patient or create an unreasonable risk
35 that a patient may be harmed;

36 (5) Suspension, revocation, or restriction of the individual's
37 license to practice any health care profession by competent authority
38 in any state, federal, or foreign jurisdiction, a certified copy of

1 the order, stipulation, or agreement being conclusive evidence of the
2 revocation, suspension, or restriction;

3 (6) The possession, use, prescription for use, or distribution of
4 controlled substances or legend drugs in any way other than for
5 legitimate or therapeutic purposes, diversion of controlled
6 substances or legend drugs, the violation of any drug law, or
7 prescribing controlled substances for oneself;

8 (7) Violation of any state or federal statute or administrative
9 rule regulating the profession in question, including any statute or
10 rule defining or establishing standards of patient care or
11 professional conduct or practice;

12 (8) Failure to cooperate with the disciplining authority by:

13 (a) Not furnishing any papers, documents, records, or other
14 items;

15 (b) Not furnishing in writing a full and complete explanation
16 covering the matter contained in the complaint filed with the
17 disciplining authority;

18 (c) Not responding to subpoenas issued by the disciplining
19 authority, whether or not the recipient of the subpoena is the
20 accused in the proceeding; or

21 (d) Not providing reasonable and timely access for authorized
22 representatives of the disciplining authority seeking to perform
23 practice reviews at facilities utilized by the license holder;

24 (9) Failure to comply with an order issued by the disciplining
25 authority or a stipulation for informal disposition entered into with
26 the disciplining authority;

27 (10) Aiding or abetting an unlicensed person to practice when a
28 license is required;

29 (11) Violations of rules established by any health agency;

30 (12) Practice beyond the scope of practice as defined by law or
31 rule;

32 (13) Misrepresentation or fraud in any aspect of the conduct of
33 the business or profession;

34 (14) Failure to adequately supervise auxiliary staff to the
35 extent that the consumer's health or safety is at risk;

36 (15) Engaging in a profession involving contact with the public
37 while suffering from a contagious or infectious disease involving
38 serious risk to public health;

39 (16) Promotion for personal gain of any unnecessary or
40 inefficacious drug, device, treatment, procedure, or service;

1 (17) Conviction of any gross misdemeanor or felony relating to
2 the practice of the person's profession. For the purposes of this
3 subsection, conviction includes all instances in which a plea of
4 guilty or nolo contendere is the basis for conviction and all
5 proceedings in which the sentence has been deferred or suspended.
6 Nothing in this section abrogates rights guaranteed under chapter
7 9.96A RCW;

8 (18) The offering, undertaking, or agreeing to cure or treat
9 disease by a secret method, procedure, treatment, or medicine, or the
10 treating, operating, or prescribing for any health condition by a
11 method, means, or procedure which the licensee refuses to divulge
12 upon demand of the disciplining authority;

13 (19) The willful betrayal of a practitioner-patient privilege as
14 recognized by law;

15 (20) Violation of chapter 19.68 RCW or a pattern of violations of
16 RCW 41.05.700(8), 48.43.735(8), 48.49.020, 48.49.030, 71.24.335(8),
17 or 74.09.325(8);

18 (21) Interference with an investigation or disciplinary
19 proceeding by willful misrepresentation of facts before the
20 disciplining authority or its authorized representative, or by the
21 use of threats or harassment against any patient or witness to
22 prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or
23 any other legal action, or by the use of financial inducements to any
24 patient or witness to prevent or attempt to prevent him or her from
25 providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding;

26 (22) Current misuse of:

27 (a) Alcohol;

28 (b) Controlled substances; or

29 (c) Legend drugs;

30 (23) Abuse of a client or patient or sexual contact with a client
31 or patient;

32 (24) Acceptance of more than a nominal gratuity, hospitality, or
33 subsidy offered by a representative or vendor of medical or health-
34 related products or services intended for patients, in contemplation
35 of a sale or for use in research publishable in professional
36 journals, where a conflict of interest is presented, as defined by
37 rules of the disciplining authority, in consultation with the
38 department, based on recognized professional ethical standards;

39 (25) Violation of RCW 18.130.420;

- 1 (26) Performing conversion therapy on a patient under age
2 eighteen;
- 3 (27) Violation of RCW 18.130.430;
- 4 (28) Violation of RCW 18.130.460;
- 5 (29) Violation of RCW 48.43.732; (~~or~~)
- 6 (30) Implanting the license holder's own gametes or reproductive
7 material into a patient; or
- 8 (31) Violation of section 2 of this act.

9 **Sec. 4.** RCW 18.57.031 and 1987 c 150 s 42 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1) No person may practice or represent himself or herself as an
12 osteopathic physician and surgeon without first having a valid
13 license to do so.

14 (2) A person may only represent himself or herself as an
15 osteopathic physician surgeon if the person:

16 (a) Is licensed under this chapter;

17 (b) Has completed a surgical residency or fellowship approved by
18 the accreditation council for graduate medical education or the royal
19 college of physicians and surgeons of Canada;

20 (c) Is certified, recertified, or eligible for examination by a
21 surgical board of the American board of medical specialties or the
22 royal college of physicians and surgeons of Canada; and

23 (d) Maintains continuing education and proficiency in their
24 specialty.

25 (3) A violation of this section may be considered practice by an
26 unlicensed person under RCW 18.130.190.

27 **Sec. 5.** RCW 18.71.021 and 1987 c 150 s 46 are each amended to
28 read as follows:

29 (1) No person may practice or represent himself or herself as
30 practicing medicine without first having a valid license to do so.

31 (2) A person may only represent himself or herself as a physician
32 surgeon if the person:

33 (a) Is licensed under this chapter;

34 (b) Has completed a surgical residency or fellowship approved by
35 the accreditation council for graduate medical education or the royal
36 college of physicians and surgeons of Canada;

1 (c) Is certified, recertified, or eligible for examination by a
2 surgical board of the American board of medical specialties or the
3 royal college of physicians and surgeons of Canada; and

4 (d) Maintains continuing education and proficiency in their
5 specialty.

6 (3) A violation of this section may be considered practice by an
7 unlicensed person under RCW 18.130.190.

8 NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. A new section is added to chapter 70.41
9 RCW to read as follows:

10 Each hospital must issue updated identification badges as
11 necessary to meet the requirements of section 2 of this act at the
12 earlier of:

13 (1) The time that a new employee who is subject to section
14 2(1)(a) of this act is hired to provide health care services;

15 (2) The time an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a) of
16 this act requires a new photograph for an identification badge;

17 (3) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
18 of this act requires a new identification badge because the
19 employee's name has changed;

20 (4) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
21 of this act receives a new health care credential or health care-
22 related degree;

23 (5) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
24 of this act begins a new credentialing period; or

25 (6) January 1, 2030.

26 NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. A new section is added to chapter 18.20
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 Each assisted living facility must issue updated identification
29 badges as necessary to meet the requirements of section 2 of this act
30 at the earlier of:

31 (1) The time that a new employee who is subject to section
32 2(1)(a) of this act is hired to provide health care services;

33 (2) The time an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a) of
34 this act requires a new photograph for an identification badge;

35 (3) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
36 of this act requires a new identification badge because the
37 employee's name has changed;

1 (4) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
2 of this act receives a new health care credential or health care-
3 related degree;

4 (5) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
5 of this act begins a new credentialing period; or

6 (6) January 1, 2030.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 18.51
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 Each nursing home must issue updated identification badges as
10 necessary to meet the requirements of section 2 of this act at the
11 earlier of:

12 (1) The time that a new employee who is subject to section
13 2(1)(a) of this act is hired to provide health care services;

14 (2) The time an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a) of
15 this act requires a new photograph for an identification badge;

16 (3) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
17 of this act requires a new identification badge because the
18 employee's name has changed;

19 (4) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
20 of this act receives a new health care credential or health care-
21 related degree;

22 (5) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
23 of this act begins a new credentialing period; or

24 (6) January 1, 2030.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 70.128
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 Each adult family home must issue updated identification badges
28 as necessary to meet the requirements of section 2 of this act at the
29 earlier of:

30 (1) The time that a new employee who is subject to section
31 2(1)(a) of this act is hired to provide health care services;

32 (2) The time an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a) of
33 this act requires a new photograph for an identification badge;

34 (3) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
35 of this act requires a new identification badge because the
36 employee's name has changed;

1 (4) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
2 of this act receives a new health care credential or health care-
3 related degree;

4 (5) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
5 of this act begins a new credentialing period; or

6 (6) January 1, 2030.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** A new section is added to chapter 70.230
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 Each ambulatory surgical facility must issue updated
10 identification badges as necessary to meet the requirements of
11 section 2 of this act at the earlier of:

12 (1) The time that a new employee who is subject to section
13 2(1)(a) of this act is hired to provide health care services;

14 (2) The time an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a) of
15 this act requires a new photograph for an identification badge;

16 (3) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
17 of this act requires a new identification badge because the
18 employee's name has changed;

19 (4) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
20 of this act receives a new health care credential or health care-
21 related degree;

22 (5) The time that an employee who is subject to section 2(1)(a)
23 of this act begins a new credentialing period; or

24 (6) January 1, 2030.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** A new section is added to chapter 18.130
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 No health profession board or commission may deviate from the
28 requirements of this act.

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