

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

House Bill 768 (Delegate Hubbard. *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Professional Counselors - Licensing

This bill provides for the qualifications and licensure of clinical professional counselors, clinical marriage and family therapists, and clinical alcohol and drug counselors. An individual is prohibited from practicing in the State as a clinical professional counselor, clinical marriage and family therapist, or clinical alcohol and drug counselor unless licensed by the State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors.

The bill also authorizes the board to investigate complaints and take disciplinary action against a licensed professional counselor who is also registered as a psychology associate.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues from license fees could increase by \$52,500 in FY 2000. Future year revenues reflect a constant number of new applicants each year, attrition, and biennial renewals. No effect on expenditures.

(in dollars)	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
SF Revenues	0	\$52,500	\$8,800	\$51,500	\$16,000
SF Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	0	\$52,500	\$8,800	\$51,500	\$16,000

Note: () - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. Licensure as clinical professional counselors, clinical marriage and family therapists, or clinical alcohol and drug counselors may expand the scope of practice for some small businesses/self-employed counselors/therapists. On the other hand, the costs associated with licensure would increase costs for these small businesses.

Fiscal Analysis

Bill Summary: The board must waive the requirements for licensing if the individual has filed a letter of intent with the board by October 1, 1999 and meets specified requirements by

October 1, 2001. Any person who violates the provisions of the bill is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum fine of \$500 and/or imprisonment of six months.

The Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors and the Board of Examiners of Psychologists must develop regulations by October 1, 2000 relating to the minimum training standards for the administration and interpretation of psychological testing by professional counselors who are licensed or certified by the Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors and minimum continuing education requirements of licensed professional counselors.

The bill also modifies the membership requirements for the Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors. The professional counselor-marriage and family therapist board member must be licensed, instead of certified, but the professional counselor-alcohol and drug board member can be either certified or licensed.

State Revenues: The board intends to start licensing professional counselors on July 1, 1999. It is anticipated that approximately 300 applicants would apply for licensure in the first year. Consequently, special fund revenues from license fees could increase by \$52,500 in fiscal 2000 (300 applicants x \$175 initial license fee).

Future year revenues assume 50 new applicants each year, 5% attrition, and biennial renewal fee of \$150.

State Expenditures: Any increase in workload or expenditures as a result of this bill could be absorbed within the board's existing budgeted resources.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 1998
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