

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Revised

House Bill 1188

(Delegate Hubbard)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists - Membership

This bill clarifies the qualifications for a licensed clinical professional counselor to be eligible to serve as a member of the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists and repeals specified educational and supervised experience requirements for a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist and a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor to serve as a member of the board.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's change is technical in nature and does not affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The mission of the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists is to protect the citizens of Maryland and to promote quality health care in the field of counseling by:

- licensing and certifying professional counselors, alcohol and drug counselors, and marriage and family therapists;
- receiving and resolving complaints regarding professional counselors and therapists; and

- setting standards for the practice of professional counseling that reflect new and emergent developments in the practice of professional counseling and therapy through regulations and legislation.

The board consists of 13 members appointed by the Governor with the advice of the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene. Five members of the board are licensed clinical professional counselors, three members are licensed clinical marriage and family therapists, and three members are licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselors. The remaining two members are consumers.

Chapter 505 of 2008 altered the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act to reflect the board's focus on licensure over certification and specified educational and supervised experience requirements for licensed clinical marriage and family therapists and licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselors. To qualify as a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist, an individual has to hold either a master's or a doctoral degree in a marriage and family field, with instruction in several specified specialized areas; have completed at least 60 graduate credit hours in other specified areas of instruction; have completed at least two years and 2,000 hours of supervised experience after award of the degree, as well as two years of supervised clinical experience; and pass an examination in marital and family therapy.

To qualify as a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor, an individual has to hold either a master's or doctoral degree in a health and human services counseling field or have completed a program of studies deemed substantially equivalent by the board; have completed at least 60 graduate credit hours approved by the board, including 26 credit hours in specified areas of instruction; have completed at least three years and 2,000 hours of supervised experience (two years of supervised experience must be completed after the award of the degree); and pass an examination approved by the board.

Background: The repeal of educational and supervised experience requirements for board members under the bill allows individuals to serve on the board who were lawfully practicing in their field as certified counselors prior to 2008 and were grandfathered into licensure when new educational and supervised experience requirements were introduced. Under the bill, these individuals may serve as board members without meeting the new educational and training standards required under Chapter 505 of 2008.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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