H-0379.2

HOUSE BILL 1340

State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session

By Representatives Riccelli, Thai, Berry, Ormsby, Chopp, Macri, Bergquist, Bateman, Simmons, Stonier, Berg, Duerr, Wylie, Senn, Taylor, Fitzgibbon, Cortes, Goodman, Reed, and Lekanoff

AN ACT Relating to actions by health professions disciplining authorities against license applicants and license holders for providing reproductive health care services or gender affirming treatment; amending RCW 18.130.180; reenacting and amending RCW 18.130.055; and adding a new section to chapter 18.130 RCW.

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

Sec. 1. RCW 18.130.055 and 2019 c 446 s 46 and 2019 c 444 s 24 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) The disciplining authority may deny an application for licensure or grant a license with conditions if the applicant:

(a) Has had his or her license to practice any health care profession suspended, revoked, or restricted, by competent authority in any state, federal, or foreign jurisdiction, except as provided in section 3 of this act;

(b) Has committed any act defined as unprofessional conduct for a license holder under RCW 18.130.180, except as provided in RCW 9.97.020 and section 3 of this act;

(c) Has been convicted or is subject to current prosecution or pending charges of a crime involving moral turpitude or a crime identified in RCW 43.43.830, except as provided in RCW 9.97.020, 18.205.097, and 18.19.095. For purposes of this section, conviction

includes all instances in which a plea of guilty or nolo contendere is the basis for the conviction and all proceedings in which the prosecution or sentence has been deferred or suspended. At the request of an applicant for an original license whose conviction is under appeal, the disciplining authority may defer decision upon the application during the pendency of such a prosecution or appeal;

(d) Fails to prove that he or she is qualified in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, the chapters identified in RCW 18.130.040(2), or the rules adopted by the disciplining authority; or

(e) Is not able to practice with reasonable skill and safety to consumers by reason of any mental or physical condition.

(i) The disciplining authority may require the applicant, at his or her own expense, to submit to a mental, physical, or psychological examination by one or more licensed health professionals designated by the disciplining authority. The disciplining authority shall provide written notice of its requirement for a mental or physical examination that includes a statement of the specific conduct, event, or circumstances justifying an examination and a statement of the nature, purpose, scope, and content of the intended examination. If the applicant fails to submit to the examination or provide the results of the examination or any required waivers, the disciplining authority may deny the application.

(ii) An applicant governed by this chapter is deemed to have given consent to submit to a mental, physical, or psychological examination when directed in writing by the disciplining authority and further to have waived all objections to the admissibility or use of the examining health professional's testimony or examination reports by the disciplining authority on the grounds that the testimony or reports constitute privileged communications.

(2) The provisions of RCW 9.95.240 and chapter 9.96A RCW do not apply to a decision to deny a license under this section.

(3) The disciplining authority shall give written notice to the applicant of the decision to deny a license or grant a license with conditions in response to an application for a license. The notice must state the grounds and factual basis for the action and be served upon the applicant.

(4) A license applicant who is aggrieved by the decision to deny the license or grant the license with conditions has the right to an adjudicative proceeding. The application for adjudicative proceeding must be in writing, state the basis for contesting the adverse

action, include a copy of the adverse notice, and be served on and received by the department within twenty-eight days of the decision. The license applicant has the burden to establish, by a preponderance of evidence, that the license applicant is qualified in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, the chapters identified in RCW 18.130.040(2), and the rules adopted by the disciplining authority.

Sec. 2. RCW 18.130.180 and 2021 c 157 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~The~~)) Except as provided in section 3 of this act, the following conduct, acts, or conditions constitute unprofessional conduct for any license holder under the jurisdiction of this chapter:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(6) ((~~Except when authorized by RCW 18.130.345, the~~)) The possession, use, prescription for use, or distribution of controlled substances or legend drugs in any way other than for legitimate or therapeutic purposes, diversion of controlled substances or legend drugs, the violation of any drug law, or prescribing controlled substances for oneself;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(18) ((~~The procuring, or aiding or abetting in procuring, a criminal abortion;~~

~~(19)~~)) The offering, undertaking, or agreeing to cure or treat disease by a secret method, procedure, treatment, or medicine, or the treating, operating, or prescribing for any health condition by a method, means, or procedure which the licensee refuses to divulge upon demand of the disciplining authority;

((~~(20)~~)) (19) The willful betrayal of a practitioner-patient privilege as recognized by law;

((~~(21)~~)) (20) Violation of chapter 19.68 RCW or a pattern of violations of RCW 41.05.700(8), 48.43.735(8), 48.49.020, 48.49.030, 71.24.335(8), or 74.09.325(8);

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

((~~(23)~~)) (22) Current misuse of:

(a) Alcohol;

(b) Controlled substances; or

(c) Legend drugs;

((~~(24)~~)) (23) Abuse of a client or patient or sexual contact with a client or patient;

((~~(25)~~)) (24) Acceptance of more than a nominal gratuity, hospitality, or subsidy offered by a representative or vendor of medical or health-related products or services intended for patients, in contemplation of a sale or for use in research publishable in professional journals, where a conflict of interest is presented, as

defined by rules of the disciplining authority, in consultation with the department, based on recognized professional ethical standards;

((~~(26)~~)) (25) Violation of RCW 18.130.420;

((~~(27)~~)) (26) Performing conversion therapy on a patient under age eighteen;

((~~(28)~~)) (27) Violation of RCW 18.130.430.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 18.130 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Notwithstanding RCW 18.130.180, the following shall not constitute unprofessional conduct under this chapter:

(a) The provision of, authorization of, recommendation of, aiding in, assistance in, referral for, or other participation in any reproductive health care services or gender affirming treatment, by a license holder acting in accordance with the laws of this state, including those relating to accepted standards of care, regardless of whether the patient is a resident of this state or another state;

(b) A conviction or disciplinary action based solely on the license holder's violation of another state's laws prohibiting the provision of, authorization of, recommendation of, aiding in, assistance in, referral for, or other participation in any reproductive health care services or gender affirming treatment.

(2) Except as required by chapter 18.71B RCW, the following, alone or in combination, shall not serve as the basis for a denial of an application for licensure, licensure renewal, or temporary practice permit, or for any other disciplinary action by a disciplining authority against an applicant or license holder:

(a) The provision of, authorization of, recommendation of, aiding in, assistance in, referral for, or other participation in any reproductive health care services or gender affirming treatment, by a license holder acting in accordance with the laws of this state, including those relating to accepted standards of care, regardless of whether the patient is a resident of this state or another state;

(b) A conviction or disciplinary action based solely on the license holder's violation of another state's laws prohibiting the provision of, authorization of, recommendation of, aiding in, assistance in, referral for, or other participation in any reproductive health care services or gender affirming treatment.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the scope of practice of any license holder licensed under this title,

nor does this section give any such license holder the authority to act outside their scope of practice as defined under this title.

(4) For the purposes of this section the following definitions apply:

(a) "Gender affirming treatment" means a service or product that a health care provider, as defined in RCW 70.02.010, provides to an individual to support and affirm the individual's gender identity. "Gender affirming treatment" includes, but is not limited to, treatment for gender dysphoria. "Gender affirming treatment" can be provided to two spirit, transgender, nonbinary, and other gender diverse individuals.

(b) "Reproductive health care services" means any medical services or treatments, including pharmaceutical and preventive care services or treatments, directly involved in the reproductive system and its processes, functions, and organs involved in reproduction.

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