

No. 2002-4

AN ACT

HB 1813

Amending the act of July 9, 1987 (P.L.220, No.39), entitled "An act licensing and regulating the practice of social work; providing penalties; and making an appropriation," further providing for the definition of "practice of professional counseling" and for exemption from licensure.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The definition of "practice of professional counseling" in section 3 of the act of July 9, 1987 (P.L.220, No.39), known as the Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act, amended December 21, 1998 (P.L.1017, No.136), is amended to read:

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

* * *

"Practice of professional counseling." Includes, *to the extent compatible with a practitioner's education and professional competence*, all of the following:

(1) The application of principles and practices of counseling, mental health and human development to evaluate and facilitate human growth and adjustment throughout the life span and to prevent and treat mental, emotional or behavioral disorders and associated stresses which interfere with mental health and normal human growth and development.

(2) The evaluation and assessment of normal and abnormal mental, emotional, social, educational, vocational, family and behavioral functioning throughout the life span; individual, group, family counseling and psychotherapy; crisis intervention, career counseling and educational and vocational counseling; functional assessment of persons with disabilities; and professional consulting.

(3) Professional counselors' utilization of verbal and nonverbal approaches and specialization in the use of arts-based therapeutic approaches, such as art, dance, music or drama, to accomplish treatment objectives.

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Section 2. Section 9 of the act, amended December 21, 1998 (P.L.1017, No.136), is amended to read:

Section 9. Exemption from licensure examination.

(a) Clinical social worker.—The requirements of section 7(d)(4) shall not apply and a license shall be issued without examination to an applicant who meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has submitted an application for a clinical social worker license, accompanied by the required fee, within **[three] four** years after the effective date of this paragraph.

(2) Is licensed under this act as a social worker.

(3) Can demonstrate proof of practice of clinical social work for at least five of the seven years immediately prior to the date of application for license **[and that such practice was conducted in this Commonwealth]**.

(4) Has successfully met one of the following educational requirements:

(i) Has a doctoral degree in social work from an accredited educational institution.

(ii) Has a master's degree in social work of at least 48 credit hours with a specialty in direct practice social work from an accredited educational institution.

(iii) Has a master's degree in social work of at least 48 credit hours with a specialty other than direct practice social work and has taken either 12 additional credit hours of graduate study in direct practice social work or has within the past ten years completed sufficient continuing education in courses satisfactory to the board to equal 12 credit hours at a ratio of 15 continuing education hours equaling one credit hour.

(5) Can demonstrate holding a current professional certification in clinical social work and having passed a national certification examination in clinical social work administered by a nationally recognized credentialing agency approved by the board. If passing an examination was not a prerequisite for obtaining professional certification, an applicant must demonstrate to the board that certification was obtained pursuant to meeting certification criteria satisfactory to the board.

(b) Marriage and family therapists.—The requirements of section 7(e)(4) shall not apply and a license shall be issued without examination to an applicant who meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has submitted an application for a marriage and family therapist license, accompanied by the required fee, within **[three] four** years after the effective date of this paragraph.

(2) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

(3) Can demonstrate proof of practice of marriage and family therapy for at least five of the seven years immediately prior to the date of application for license.

(4) Has successfully met one of the following educational requirements:

(i) Has a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy or in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited

educational institution with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board.

(ii) Has a master's degree of at least 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in marriage and family therapy or in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board.

(iii) Has a master's degree of less than 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours but not less than 36 semester hours or 54 quarter hours in marriage and family therapy or in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board and has within the past ten years completed sufficient continuing education satisfactory to the board to equal the number of hours needed to achieve a total of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours at a ratio of 15 continuing education hours equaling one semester hour.

(5) Can demonstrate holding a current professional certification in marriage and family therapy and having passed an examination in marriage and family therapy approved by the board.

(c) Professional counselors.—The requirements of section 7(f)(4) shall not apply and a license shall be issued without examination to an applicant who meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has submitted an application for a professional counselor license, accompanied by the required fee, within [three] *four* years after the effective date of this paragraph.

(2) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

(3) Can demonstrate proof of practice of professional counseling for at least five of the seven years immediately prior to the date of application for license.

(4) Has successfully met one of the following educational requirements:

(i) Has a doctoral degree in professional counseling or a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of professional counseling from an accredited educational institution.

(ii) Has a master's degree of at least 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours in professional counseling or a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of professional counseling from an accredited educational institution.

(iii) Has a master's degree of less than 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours but not less than 36 semester hours or 54 quarter hours in professional counseling or a field determined by the board by

regulation to be closely related to the practice of professional counseling and has within the past ten years completed sufficient continuing education satisfactory to the board to equal the number of hours needed to achieve a total of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours at a ratio of 15 continuing education hours equaling one semester hour.

(5) Can demonstrate holding a current professional certification in professional counseling and having passed a national certification examination in professional counseling administered by a nationally recognized credentialing agency approved by the board.

Section 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 13th day of February, A.D. 2002.

MARK S. SCHWEIKER