

131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 997

H.P. 633

House of Representatives, March 7, 2023

Resolve, to Reduce Workforce Barriers for Mental Health Professionals in Maine

Reference to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

R(+ B. Hunt

Presented by Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook. Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and

Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MADIGAN of Waterville, PERRY of Calais.

- Sec. 1. Department of Health and Human Services to amend rules governing education requirements for behavioral health professionals providing services for children. Resolved: That, no later than October 1, 2023, the Department of Health and Human Services shall amend its rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 28 and Section 65 to change the educational requirements for all behavioral health professionals providing services for children, regardless of the setting in which the service is provided, and for such behavioral health professionals to receive training to provide specialized services to allow the following educational requirements:
- 1. A minimum of 60 higher education credit hours in a related field of social services, human services, health or education;
 - 2. A minimum of 90 higher education credit hours in an unrelated field; or
- 3. A high school diploma or equivalent with training and oversight as determined by the department in addition to the training provided for certification as a behavioral health professional.

In adopting rules under this section, the Department of Health and Human Services shall ensure that the training and oversight requirements for persons with a high school diploma or equivalent are consistent in both Section 28 and Section 65 of the department's rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II.

The changes to educational requirements required by this resolve do not affect the requirements for behavioral health professional training and the prescribed time frames.

- **Sec. 2. Training within existing resources. Resolved:** That the Department of Health and Human Services shall amend or establish contracts to train any number of additional individuals to become behavioral health professionals providing services for children pursuant to section 1, regardless of the setting in which the service is provided, within existing resources. The department may make any changes necessary, including choosing to charge individuals or their employers fees for training, in order to offer training within existing resources.
- Sec. 3. Department of Health and Human Services to amend its guidelines on community-based mental health rehabilitation technician certification. Resolved: That, no later than October 1, 2023, the Department of Health and Human Services shall amend its guidelines for the mental health rehabilitation technician/community certification, also known as an MHRT/C certification, in order to allow an individual who has completed a 4-year postsecondary educational degree program in a mental health-related field or obtained a graduate degree in a mental health-related field to receive the MHRT/C certification regardless of whether the individual has met the requirements regarding the competency-based program contracted by the department, as long as the individual has met the 3 so-called priority domains identified in the certification program.

40 SUMMARY

This resolve changes the educational requirements for behavioral health professionals providing services for children, regardless of the setting in which the service is provided,

to a minimum of 60 credit hours in a related field, 90 credit hours in an unrelated field or a high school diploma or equivalent with training and oversight as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services in addition to the training provided for certification as a behavioral health professional. It requires the department to amend or establish contracts for training behavioral health professionals to train any number of additional individuals within existing resources and authorizes the department to opt to charge individuals or their employers fees for training.

The resolve also requires the department to amend its guidelines regarding certification for mental health rehabilitation technician/community technicians so that an individual who has completed a 4-year postsecondary educational degree program in a mental health-related field or a graduate degree in a mental health-related field does not have to meet all 8 competency domains in the training contracted from the department as long as the individual has met the 3 priority domains.