

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Improve Professional Training for Licensed Mental Health Clinicians**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §3831, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. Q, §9, is further amended to read:

**2. Psychologist.** A candidate for this license shall furnish the board with satisfactory evidence that the candidate is trustworthy and competent to practice as a psychologist in such manner as to safeguard the interest of the public; has received a doctorate degree reflecting comprehensive training in psychology from an accredited institution recognized by the board as maintaining satisfactory standards, at the time the degree was granted; has had at least 2 years of experience in psychology of a type considered by the board to be qualifying in nature; is competent in psychology, as shown by passing such examinations as the board determines necessary; is not considered by the board to be engaged in unethical practice; and has not within the preceding 6 months failed an examination. The board shall recognize that valid comprehensive training in psychology must be received in or accepted by a single program, but may be obtained through a degree given by administrative units other than a department of psychology, including programs approved by the National Association of School Psychologists or the American Psychological Association designation program or their successors or other organizations approved by the board. The board shall adopt a list of these programs. Individuals with degrees from programs not on that list must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Beginning January 1, 2020, a candidate for this license shall furnish the board with satisfactory evidence that the candidate has successfully completed a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. A candidate may fulfill this requirement through course work taken in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or through separate course work. The board shall accept certification from the accredited educational institution from which the applicant is a graduate that verifies the applicant's satisfaction of this requirement within the applicant's completed course curriculum.

**Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §3835, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. Q, §11, is further amended to read:

Licenses issued under this chapter expire biennially or as established by the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation. A person licensed under this chapter shall submit, on or before the established expiration date, an application for license renewal together with the renewal fee as set under section 3833-A. Beginning January 1, 2020, a person that submits an application for license renewal must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-

gender abuse dynamics. The board may accept equivalent courses in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies or equivalent teaching or practice experience completed prior to January 1, 2020 in satisfaction of this requirement. Continuing education courses taken pursuant to this paragraph must be applied to the licensee's required hours of continuing education.

**Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 1987, c. 735, §69, is further amended to read:

**1. Licensed clinical social worker.** To be qualified as a licensed clinical social worker, an applicant shall have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the social work profession; shall have successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board; and shall have received either:

A. A masters or doctoral degree in social work or social welfare from an accredited educational institution, in a clinical concentration:

(1) Shall have subsequently completed 2 years of social work experience with 96 hours of consultation in a clinical setting; or

(2) Shall have demonstrated 2 years of full-time clinical social work experience or its equivalent and have completed the graduate degree prior to January 1, 1987, and have completed 2 years of subsequent social work experience with 96 hours of consultation in a private setting; or

B. A masters or doctoral degree in social work in a nonclinical concentration from an accredited educational institution:

(1) Shall have subsequently completed 4 years of social work experience with 192 hours of consultation in a clinical setting; or

(2) Shall have demonstrated 2 years of full-time clinical social work experience or its equivalent and have completed the graduate degree prior to January 1, 1987, and have completed 4 years of subsequent social work experience with 192 hours of consultation in a private setting.

The board may waive up to one year of the post-master of social work, clinical experience requirement pursuant to this subsection for those candidates who demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board equivalent clinical experience prior to receiving the masters degree in social work.

The board shall issue rules, in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375, defining the clinical experience required for this level of licensure.

Beginning January 1, 2020, an applicant shall have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. A candidate may fulfill this requirement through course work taken in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or through separate course work. The board shall accept certification from the accredited educational institution from which the applicant is a graduate that verifies the applicant's satisfaction of this requirement within the applicant's completed course curriculum.

**Sec. 4. 32 MRSA §7060**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. V, §15, is further amended by adding after the first paragraph a new paragraph to read:

Beginning January 1, 2020, a person that submits an application for license renewal must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. The board may accept equivalent courses in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies or equivalent teaching or practice experience completed prior to January 1, 2020 in satisfaction of this requirement. Continuing education courses taken pursuant to this paragraph must be applied to the licensee's required hours of continuing education.

**Sec. 5. 32 MRSA §13858, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 542, §2, is further amended to read:

**2. Licensed clinical professional counselor.** To be qualified as a licensed clinical professional counselor, an applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the counseling profession, successfully complete the examination prescribed by the board and have:

A. A master's degree or a doctoral degree in counseling or an allied mental health field from an accredited institution or a program approved by the board. Such schooling must include a minimum core curriculum and total credit hours as adopted by the board; ~~and~~

B. Two years of experience after obtainment of a master's degree or a doctoral degree to include at least 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience with a minimum of 100 hours of personal supervision; ~~and~~

C. Beginning January 1, 2020, demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. A candidate may fulfill this requirement through course work taken in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or through separate course work. The board shall accept certification from the accredited educational institution from which the applicant is a graduate that verifies the applicant's satisfaction of this requirement within the applicant's completed course curriculum.

**Sec. 6. 32 MRSA §13860, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 1997, c. 128, §1, is further amended to read:

**2. Continuing education and supervision.** The board, by rule, may establish continuing education and supervision requirements. Applicants for renewal of license must show proof of satisfying the continuing education requirements set forth by the board. If a license lapses due to failure of the licensee to meet continuing education requirements, the licensee may renew the license upon completion of the required continuing education. Beginning January 1, 2020, applicants for renewal of license must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. The board may accept equivalent courses in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies or equivalent teaching or practice experience completed prior to January 1, 2020 in satisfaction of this requirement. Continuing education courses taken pursuant to this subsection must be applied to the licensee's required hours of continuing education.

## SUMMARY

This bill makes changes to the laws governing the licensure requirements for psychologists, clinical professional counselors and clinical social workers. It requires that, beginning January 1, 2020, applicants for licensure demonstrate to the satisfaction of their respective licensing boards that they have successfully completed a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. Applicants may fulfill this requirement through course work taken in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or through separate course work. The bill requires that the boards accept certification from the accredited educational institution from which the applicant is a graduate that verifies the applicant's satisfaction of this requirement within the applicant's completed course curriculum.

The bill also makes changes to the licensure renewal requirements for psychologists, clinical professional counselors and clinical social workers to require that, beginning January 1, 2020, applicants for licensure renewal in these categories demonstrate to the satisfaction of their respective licensing boards successful completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender abuse dynamics. The bill allows the boards to accept equivalent courses in spousal or partner abuse screening and referral and intervention strategies or equivalent teaching or practice experience completed prior to January 1, 2020 in satisfaction of this requirement. The bill requires that continuing education courses taken for this purpose must be applied to the licensee's required hours of continuing education.