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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS -- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS
AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Bennett, Fogarty, McNamara, Perez,
Carson, Casimiro, Azzinaro, Donovan, and Fellela
Date Introduced: January 14, 2026

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 5-63.2-10 and 5-63.2-15 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-63.2
2 entitled "Mental Health Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists" are hereby amended to
3 read as follows:

4 **5-63.2-10. Qualifications of licensed marriage and family therapist associates and**
5 **licensed marriage and family therapists.**

6 (a) The department shall issue the appropriate license to applicants who meet the
7 qualifications of this section.

8 (1) **Prerequisites for licensure of a marriage and family therapist associate.** A license
9 as a “marriage and family therapist associate” shall be issued to an applicant who meets the
10 following qualifications:

11 (i) Is of good character;

12 (ii) Has completed a graduate degree program specializing in marital and family therapy
13 from a college or university accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges,
14 or an equivalent regional accreditation agency;

15 (iii) Has completed sixty (60) semester hours or ninety (90) quarter hours within his or her
16 graduate degree program specializing in marital and family therapy; and

17 (iv) ~~Has completed a minimum of twelve (12) semester hours or eighteen (18) quarter hours~~
18 ~~of supervised practicum and a one calendar year of supervised internship consisting of twenty (20)~~

~~hours per week, or its equivalent, with emphasis in marriage and family therapy supervised by the department within the college or university granting the requisite degree or by an accredited postgraduate clinical training program, approved by the commission on accreditation for marriage and family therapy education recognized by the United States Department of Education, or education and/or experience that is deemed equivalent by the board.~~ Has completed a supervised internship or practicum in marriage and family therapy as part of the master's or doctoral program of study. The internship or practicum shall include a minimum of three hundred (300) hours of direct client contact with individuals, family groups, couples, groups, public organizations, or private organizations under the direction of an approved supervisor.

(2) **Prerequisites for licensure of a marriage and family therapist.** A license as a “marriage and family therapist” shall be issued to an applicant who meets the following qualifications:

(i) Has been awarded a master's degree and has had a minimum of two (2) years of relevant postgraduate experience, including at least ~~two~~ one thousand ~~five hundred (2,000)~~ (1,500) hours (the "total required hours") of direct client contact offering clinical or counseling or therapy services with emphasis in marriage and family therapy, with at least one thousand four hundred (1,400) of the total required hours earned by the applicant after the applicant has been ~~subsequent to being~~ awarded a master's degree ~~or doctorate~~. A maximum of one hundred (100) hours of the total required hours may be earned during a graduate degree program provided in § 5-63.2-10(a)(1)(ii). A minimum of three hundred (300) hours of the total required hours must be spent with couples, families, or groups of two (2) or more individuals; or

(ii) Has been awarded a doctoral degree and has had a minimum of two (2) years of relevant postgraduate experience, including at least one thousand (1,000) hours of direct client contact offering clinical or counseling or therapy services with emphasis in marriage and family therapy and has completed a marriage and family therapy doctoral program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education; and

~~(iii)~~ (iii) Has had a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of post-degree supervised case work spread over two (2) years; provided, that the supervision was provided by a person who, at the time of rendering the supervision, was recognized by the board as an approved supervisor; and

~~(iii)~~ (iv) Has passed to the satisfaction of the board an examination conducted by it to determine the applicant's qualifications for licensure as a marriage and family therapist or is applying for licensure under the provisions of § 5-63.2-15.

(b) A candidate shall be qualified for licensure as a marriage and family therapist associate, or a marriage and family therapist upon the affirmative vote of at least four (4) members of the board, two (2) of whom must be marriage and family therapists on the board.

1 **5-63.2-15. Licensure by endorsement.**

2 (a) A license as a clinical mental health counselor ~~or marriage and family therapist~~ may be
3 issued, in the discretion of the board, without examination, to an applicant who is a clinical mental
4 health counselor where the applicant is licensed or certified in another state whose requirements
5 are equivalent to or exceed the requirements established pursuant to this chapter.

6 (b) A license as a marriage and family therapist may be issued, without examination, to an
7 applicant who is a marriage and family therapist where the applicant is licensed in another state as
8 a marriage and family therapist and has been licensed as a marriage and family therapist in another
9 state for at least one year.

10 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS -- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS
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- 1
- This act would change the direct client contact hour requirements for applicants for
- 2
- licensure of marriage and family therapist associate and applicants for licensure of marriage and
- 3
- family therapist. The act would permit an applicant to receive a license as a marriage and family
- 4
- therapist without examination when the applicant is licensed as such in another state for one year
- 5
- or longer.
- 6
- This act would take effect upon passage.

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