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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 634 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Wayne Schmidt
Committee: Health Policy

Date Completed: 11-20-17

RATIONALE

The Public Health Code permits the issuance of a temporary limited license in psychology (TLLP) to an individual who holds a master's degree in psychology, and otherwise authorizes licensing boards to issue nonrenewable temporary licenses that are valid for 18 months. Despite this limit, over a number of years the Michigan Board of Psychology granted renewals or extensions of TLLPs for additional periods of time. In January 2017, however, the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs issued a notice to individuals holding a TLLP that the Department would no longer accept new requests from those wishing to extend or renew their TLLP if they had already held the license for 18 months, and TLLPs that had previously been approved for an extension or renewed beyond the initial 18-month period would expire on August 31, 2017. Many people believe that the renewal of TLLPs is necessary for master's and doctoral level psychology students to complete required clinical and internship training. It has been suggested that TLLPs should be valid for a longer period of time and that temporary licensees should be allowed to apply to renew their TLLPs.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Public Health Code to provide that a temporary limited license in psychology would be valid for 24 months and could be renewed either for one additional 24-month term, if the licensee were obtaining postdoctoral experience, or for three additional 24-month terms if the TLLP were granted to an individual who was enrolled in a doctoral degree program.

Under the Code, the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, in consultation with the Michigan Board of Psychology, must promulgate rules requiring an individual, in order to be granted a limited license in psychology, to have been granted a doctoral degree in psychology, or a doctoral degree in a closely related field, from a doctoral program that meets certain requirements, and to have at least one year of postdoctoral experience in the practice of psychology in an organized health care setting or other arrangement, as established by the Board.

The Board must grant a limited license to an individual granted a master's degree in psychology from a regionally accredited college, or university, or Board-approved institution, if the individual has education, training, and experience appropriate to the practice of psychology, as established by the Board.

The Board also must grant a temporary limited license to an individual who meets the requirements to be granted limited license for the purpose of obtaining the required year of postdoctoral experience. Under the bill, beginning December 31, 2017, a TLLP that was granted for this purpose would be valid for 24 months and could be renewed for one additional 24-month term. If the Board granted a TLLP to an individual before December 31, 2017, the TLLP could be renewed for one additional 24-month term.

In addition, the bill would require the Board to grant a temporary limited license to an individual enrolled in a doctoral program that met the requirements specified in the Code. Beginning December 31, 2017, a TLLP that was granted under this provision would be valid for 24 months and could be renewed for three additional 24-month terms. If an individual enrolled in a doctoral program were granted a TLLP by the Board before December 31, 2017, his or her temporary limited license could be renewed for three additional 24-month terms.

(A doctoral program in psychology must be offered by a regionally accredited or other college, university, or Board-approved institution, and include education and training appropriate to the practice of psychology; and must have obtained the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards' national register designation, been accredited by the American Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychological Association, or obtained a similar designation from or been accredited by a Board-approved entity.)

MCL 333.18223

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The primary reason for granting a temporary limited license in psychology is to allow individuals holding a master's degree in psychology to obtain the required 2,000 hours of supervised experience and to pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology. However, TLLPs also are important for individuals at the doctoral level. In doctoral programs, internship training occurs in program-based clinics and external community settings, many of which require doctoral students to be licensed in order to provide services to patients. Some internships can last two to five years, well beyond the 18-month period for which a TLLP may be granted.

Over the past several decades, these individuals were granted TLLPs that did not expire for two years, and the Board of Psychology allowed the temporary licensees to renew their TLLPs for additional two-year periods, and sometimes for four additional years, so they could obtain the required clinical and internship training. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs has discontinued this practice, to ensure that the law is implemented as written. Without the proposed extensions, however, many students will be forced to find practicum and internships outside the State.

Additionally, doctoral students often provide services to underserved populations that commonly present complex clinical issues. Individuals with a TLLP are allowed to be approved providers for only a limited number of insurances, primary Medicaid HMO plans. They also offer low fee and pro bono services to clients who demonstrate financial need. Established therapists do not always offer such services, so this population often relies on interns and individuals with a TLLP for treatment. Many Michigan residents would be negatively affected without the services that these individuals provide.

Legislative Analyst: Stephen Jackson

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.