
The original instrument was prepared by Christopher D. Adams. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Michelle Ducharme.

DIGEST

Morrell (SB 121)

Present law defines "marriage and family therapy" to mean the professional application of psychotherapeutic and family systems theories and techniques in the assessment and treatment of individuals, couples, and families.

Proposed law amends present law and defines "marriage and family therapy" to mean the professional application of psychotherapeutic and family systems theories and techniques in the prevention, diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders in an individual and relational disorders in couples and families.

Present law defines "practice of marriage and family therapy" to mean the rendering of professional marriage and family therapy services to individuals, couples, and families, singly or in groups, whether such services are offered directly to the general public or through either public or private organizations for a fee, monetary or otherwise.

Proposed law amends present law and defines "practice of marriage and family therapy" to mean the rendering of professional marriage and family therapy and psychotherapy services, limited to prevention, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, behavioral, relational, and addiction disorders to individuals, couples, and families, singly or in groups, whether such services are offered directly to the general public or through either public or private organizations for a fee, monetary or otherwise in accordance with professional training as provided pursuant to present law and code of ethics/behavior involving the application of principles, methods, or procedures of the marriage and family therapy profession.

Present law provides for the licensure of marriage and family therapist.

Proposed law provides that a licensed marriage and family therapist engaged in the diagnosis of individuals shall furnish satisfactory evidence of the following to the board:

- (1) The applicant has graduated from a program of graduate study which in addition to the standard training in the professional application of psychotherapeutic and family systems theories, will also require a minimum of six credit hours in diagnostic psychopathology, whereas students are taught to systematically collect and analyze data based on one or both of the two standard diagnostic systems employed, International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, for the above purposes. However, licensed marriage and family therapists who have satisfied all other criteria for licensure as required by the board on August 1, 2014, shall be allowed to diagnose individuals upon completion of the continuing

education requirements of proposed law.

- (2) As diagnosis is constantly being enhanced by emerging empirical research, the licensed marriage and family therapist shall receive six hours of credit in continuing education that focuses on diagnosis.
- (3) Nothing shall be construed to authorize any person licensed under the provisions of present law to assess, diagnose, or provide treatment to any individual suffering from a serious mental illness, as defined in present law, when medication may be indicated, except when a licensed marriage and family therapist, in accordance with best practices, consults and collaborates with a practitioner who holds a license or permit with the La. State Board of Medical Examiners or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed by the La. State Board of Nursing who is certified as a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Effective August 1, 2014.

(Amends R.S. 37:1103(6) and (9); enacts R.S. 37:1116(E))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs to the original bill

1. Adds requirements that marriage and family therapist must comply with in order to engage in the diagnosis of individuals.
2. Provides for continuing education for marriage and family therapists.
3. Provides for an exception to the prohibition of a marriage and family therapist assessing, diagnosing, or providing treatment to any individual suffering from a serious mental illness.