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H.B. 718
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Brownlee and Salvo

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill requires the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to certify (1) peer recovery supporters, youth peer supporters, and family peer supporters and (2) qualified mental health assistants (QMHAAs), qualified mental health specialists (QMHSs), and qualified mental health practitioners (QMHPs). This will result in significant one-time and ongoing administrative costs, as well as a significant gain in certification fee revenues deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90). Part of the ongoing costs will involve the hiring of additional staff.
- The bill requires the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to collaborate with the Department of Medicaid to evaluate the qualifications and experience of people providing Medicaid services as a QMHS, which will result in administrative costs.
- The bill changes the name of the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to the Behavioral Health Professionals Board and increases Board membership from 12 to 14 members. There will be one-time costs to change the Board's website, documents, signage, etc., and will minimally increase payroll costs for the Board.
- The bill requires the Board to approve education programs that may be completed for initial licenses, certificates, and endorsements, and allows the Board to establish fees and adopt rules for the Board's approval of additional education programs. This will result in additional administrative costs that will be partially offset by an increase in fee revenue.
- The bill requires the Board to adopt rules establishing a graduated system of fines with a maximum fine of \$500 per incident, which will result in increased administrative costs for rule promulgation.

Detailed Analysis

Establishment of certification processes

Peer supporters

The bill requires the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to certify peer recovery supporters, youth peer supporters, and family peer supporters. These certifications must be renewed every two years, and the Board may charge a fee for initial and renewal applications. Peer supporters are currently certified under the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH). The bill requires peer supporters to practice under supervision and establishes educational and other requirements for certification.

These provisions will increase costs for the Board, including one-time costs due to eLicense enhancements and other necessary updates, as well as ongoing costs to issue certificates and regulate these professionals. H.B. 96 of the 136th General Assembly included similar provisions in the As Introduced version of the bill, along with funding of approximately \$292,500 in FY 2026 and \$30,000 in FY 2027 to support initial costs.¹ Of this amount, the first-year costs were anticipated to be as follows: about \$100,000 for eLicense costs, \$120,000 for website development, \$60,000 for print and video production, \$12,000 for computer equipment, and \$500 for supplies. The appropriation in the second year was for unforeseen eLicense costs. Ongoing costs may be partially offset by licensure fee revenue collected. As of December 17, 2025, 4,260 peer supporters have been certified by DBH. In addition to these costs, the Board anticipated the need to hire three new staff members to support the transition of the certifications, including a certification license examiner, investigator, and program administrator. These provisions were removed from the As Enacted version of the bill. DBH currently has four staff assigned to peer supporter certification in addition to other responsibilities. DBH does not anticipate a reduction in staff or costs as these employees will be shifted to support other department programs and initiatives.

The Board will adopt rules setting the licensing fee amounts. Therefore, the exact amounts of these fees are yet to be determined. However, for the licenses and certificates the Board currently issues, it typically charges \$50 for an initial license and \$150 for a renewal license. Assuming these fees were charged to peer supporters and all 4,260 peer supporters sought certification, the Board could receive a gain in revenue of about \$213,000 for the initial certification period and \$639,000 for the renewal cycle. Total revenues would depend on the fees adopted and the number of individuals seeking certification.

Qualified mental health professionals

The bill requires the Board to establish a certification process for qualified mental health assistants (QMHAAs), qualified mental health specialists (QMHSs), and qualified mental health practitioners (QMHPs). The bill also outlines the scope of practice and certification requirements for these individuals, including that these individuals practice under supervision. It requires the Board to establish a working group to assist with the Board's initial rules. The Board must also collaborate with the Department of Medicaid to evaluate the qualifications and experience of

¹ These costs were estimated in FY 2025. As a result, costs might have increased – especially for eLicensing.

these professionals. This evaluation will be used to determine the appropriate certification of these individuals.

Similar to the fiscal impact above, the Board will experience one-time costs to establish this certification system and ongoing administrative costs to process applications. Again, start-up costs include rule promulgation and eLicense updates. LBO reached out to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) regarding the average cost to add a license type to the eLicense system. DAS does not have an average cost for eLicense enhancements or additions but stated that costs would depend on a variety of factors. These factors include whether the modification is for a new or existing license type, whether any historic or external information must be input and integrated, the number of licenses, and the standards adopted. Ongoing costs will include processing license applications and renewals, addressing questions, investigating complaints, etc. The scope of these costs will depend on the number of individuals who seek licensure and may be partially offset by licensure fee revenue. The Department of Medicaid stated that 29,500 QMHSs are currently enrolled in its Provider Network Management. It is possible that there are additional individuals using this job title who do not bill Medicaid, and the breakdown of how many individuals would be certified as QMHAs, QMHSs, and QMHPs is unknown at this time. It is likely that the costs to certify qualified mental health professionals would be greater than those described above for peer supporter certification due to difference in numbers of individuals impacted. The Board would also likely require additional staff to oversee these duties. The Department of Medicaid will also have costs to help evaluate these individuals.

The Board will adopt rules setting the licensing fee amounts. Therefore, the exact amounts of these fees are yet to be determined. However, for the licenses and certificates the Board currently issues, it typically charges \$50 for an initial license and \$150 for a renewal license. If these fees were charged to qualified mental health professionals and all 29,500 professionals sought certification, the Board could receive a considerable gain in revenue – about \$1.5 million for the initial certification period and \$4.4 million for the renewal cycle. However, fees adopted for these three professionals could vary depending on what certification is actually obtained. If this is the case, then revenues would vary.

Chemical Dependency Professionals Board name change and membership

The bill changes the name of the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to the Behavioral Health Professionals Board. This will result in one-time costs to change the Board's website, documents, signage, etc. The bill also modifies the membership of the Board. The total number of members on the Board will increase from 12 to 13. Since members of the Board receive a per diem for performing official board business, as well as reimbursements for actual and necessary expenses, this will minimally increase payroll costs for the Board.

Chemical dependency counselor assistants

The bill requires a person seeking certification as a chemical dependency counselor assistant to be at least 18 years of age and hold a high school diploma, a certificate of high school equivalence, or a higher degree. The bill also eliminates additional training requirements for preliminary certificate holders and requires the Board to establish the standards by rule. Lastly, the bill draft changes the designation that applies to the first certification that is received to

practice as this professional from “initial” to “preliminary.” These changes will result in minimal administrative costs for the Board.

Approval of education programs

The bill requires the Board to approve education programs that may be completed for initial licenses, certificates, and endorsements. The bill also extends the Board’s duty to establish fees and adopt rules for the Board’s approval of additional education programs. This will result in additional administrative costs. However, the Board can establish fees to help offset these costs.

Graduated fines

The bill requires the Board to adopt rules establishing a graduated system of fines with a maximum fine of \$500 per incident. This will result in increased administrative costs for the Board, which may be potentially offset by an increase in fine revenue for the Board.

Other provisions

The bill makes several other changes to the law regarding the Board’s operations. These provisions are discussed briefly below.

The bill specifies that a registered applicant certificate expires after 13 months. This should not have a fiscal impact on the Board. Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) 4758-5-07 currently states that certificate is a 13-month certificate.

The bill creates a gambling disorder preliminary endorsement, which may be issued by the Board to a person who meets all the current qualifications to obtain the endorsement, except for the final requirement of having completed at least 100 hours of compensated work or supervised internship in gambling disorder direct clinical experience. Depending on whether this will require any modifications to the eLicense system, or any changes to the Board’s website, there may be additional costs as a result.

The bill requires applicants for licensure, certification, or endorsement from the Board to undergo a criminal records check. This should not have a significant fiscal effect as it appears that this is currently required. O.A.C 4758-4-01 requires all applicants for initial licensure, certification, or endorsement to file a formal application on a form prescribed by the Board. The formal application contains all documentation necessary, including grade transcripts, documentation of education and training hours, and documentation of felony charges or convictions which includes a background check. The section states that a background check may not be required if the applicant holds another state of Ohio behavioral health license.

The bill requires applicants for licensure, certification, or endorsement from the Board to hold a required degree “or higher” rather than “at least” the required degree as under current law. It also requires work or internship experience for a license as a chemical dependency counselor to include services provided for substance use disorder treatment within a scope of practice to perform such services. This may result in minimal costs to update rules or the Board’s website.

The bill eliminates the statutory authority of chemical dependency professionals and gambling disorder endorsement holders to refer people to appropriate sources of help. This should not have a direct fiscal effect. However, if any of the practitioners currently refer clients

to sources of help, they would no longer be able to do so. This could decrease the number of individuals seeking such services.

The bill adds specifications and modifications regarding the confidentiality of information obtained by the Board. There may be some minimal costs to ensure confidentiality is being maintained.