AN ACT Relating to restricting the practice of conversion therapy; amending RCW 18.130.020 and 18.130.180; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature intends to regulate the professional conduct of licensed health care providers with respect to performing conversion therapy on patients under age eighteen.

(2) The legislature finds and declares that Washington has a compelling interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, and in protecting its minors against exposure to serious harms caused by conversion therapy.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act may not be construed to apply to:

(1) Speech that does not constitute performing conversion therapy by licensed health care providers on patients under age eighteen;

(2) Religious practices or counseling under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or organization that do not constitute performing conversion therapy by licensed health care providers on patients under age eighteen; and

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(3) Nonlicensed counselors acting under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or organization.

Sec. 3. RCW 18.130.020 and 2008 c 134 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Board" means any of those boards specified in RCW 18.130.040.

(2) "Clinical expertise" means the proficiency or judgment that a license holder in a particular profession acquires through clinical experience or clinical practice and that is not possessed by a lay person.

(3) "Commission" means any of the commissions specified in RCW 18.130.040.

(4)(a) "Conversion therapy" means a regime that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. The term includes efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. The term includes, but is not limited to, practices commonly referred to as "reparative therapy."

(b) "Conversion therapy" does not include counseling or psychotherapies that provide acceptance, support, and understanding of clients or the facilitation of clients' coping, social support, and identity exploration and development that do not seek to change sexual orientation or gender identity.

(5) "Department" means the department of health.

(6) "Disciplinary action" means sanctions identified in RCW 18.130.160.

(7) "Disciplining authority" means the agency, board, or commission having the authority to take disciplinary action against a holder of, or applicant for, a professional or business license upon a finding of a violation of this chapter or a chapter specified under RCW 18.130.040.

(8) "Health agency" means city and county health departments and the department of health.

(9) "License," "licensing," and "licensure" shall be deemed equivalent to the terms "license," "licensing," "licensure," "certificate," "certification," and "registration" as those terms are defined in RCW 18.120.020.
"Practice review" means an investigative audit of records related to the complaint, without prior identification of specific patient or consumer names, or an assessment of the conditions, circumstances, and methods of the professional's practice related to the complaint, to determine whether unprofessional conduct may have been committed.

"Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.

"Standards of practice" means the care, skill, and learning associated with the practice of a profession.

"Unlicensed practice" means:

(a) Practicing a profession or operating a business identified in RCW 18.130.040 without holding a valid, unexpired, unrevoked, and unsuspended license to do so; or

(b) Representing to a consumer, through offerings, advertisements, or use of a professional title or designation, that the individual is qualified to practice a profession or operate a business identified in RCW 18.130.040, without holding a valid, unexpired, unrevoked, and unsuspended license to do so.

Sec. 4. RCW 18.130.180 and 2010 c 9 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

The following conduct, acts, or conditions constitute unprofessional conduct for any license holder under the jurisdiction of this chapter:

(1) The commission of any act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption relating to the practice of the person's profession, whether the act constitutes a crime or not. If the act constitutes a crime, conviction in a criminal proceeding is not a condition precedent to disciplinary action. Upon such a conviction, however, the judgment and sentence is conclusive evidence at the ensuing disciplinary hearing of the guilt of the license holder of the crime described in the indictment or information, and of the person's violation of the statute on which it is based. For the purposes of this section, conviction includes all instances in which a plea of guilty or nolo contendere is the basis for the conviction and all proceedings in which the sentence has been deferred or suspended. Nothing in this section abrogates rights guaranteed under chapter 9.96A RCW;
(2) Misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact in obtaining a license or in reinstatement thereof;

(3) All advertising which is false, fraudulent, or misleading;

(4) Incompetence, negligence, or malpractice which results in injury to a patient or which creates an unreasonable risk that a patient may be harmed. The use of a nontraditional treatment by itself shall not constitute unprofessional conduct, provided that it does not result in injury to a patient or create an unreasonable risk that a patient may be harmed;

(5) Suspension, revocation, or restriction of the individual's license to practice any health care profession by competent authority in any state, federal, or foreign jurisdiction, a certified copy of the order, stipulation, or agreement being conclusive evidence of the revocation, suspension, or restriction;

(6) Except when authorized by RCW 18.130.345, the possession, use, prescription for use, or distribution of controlled substances or legend drugs in any way other than for legitimate or therapeutic purposes, diversion of controlled substances or legend drugs, the violation of any drug law, or prescribing controlled substances for oneself;

(7) Violation of any state or federal statute or administrative rule regulating the profession in question, including any statute or rule defining or establishing standards of patient care or professional conduct or practice;

(8) Failure to cooperate with the disciplining authority by:
   (a) Not furnishing any papers, documents, records, or other items;
   (b) Not furnishing in writing a full and complete explanation covering the matter contained in the complaint filed with the disciplining authority;
   (c) Not responding to subpoenas issued by the disciplining authority, whether or not the recipient of the subpoena is the accused in the proceeding; or
   (d) Not providing reasonable and timely access for authorized representatives of the disciplining authority seeking to perform practice reviews at facilities utilized by the license holder;

(9) Failure to comply with an order issued by the disciplining authority or a stipulation for informal disposition entered into with the disciplining authority;
(10) Aiding or abetting an unlicensed person to practice when a license is required;

(11) Violations of rules established by any health agency;

(12) Practice beyond the scope of practice as defined by law or rule;

(13) Misrepresentation or fraud in any aspect of the conduct of the business or profession;

(14) Failure to adequately supervise auxiliary staff to the extent that the consumer's health or safety is at risk;

(15) Engaging in a profession involving contact with the public while suffering from a contagious or infectious disease involving serious risk to public health;

(16) Promotion for personal gain of any unnecessary or inefficacious drug, device, treatment, procedure, or service;

(17) Conviction of any gross misdemeanor or felony relating to the practice of the person's profession. For the purposes of this subsection, conviction includes all instances in which a plea of guilty or nolo contendere is the basis for conviction and all proceedings in which the sentence has been deferred or suspended. Nothing in this section abrogates rights guaranteed under chapter 9.96A RCW;

(18) The procuring, or aiding or abetting in procuring, a criminal abortion;

(19) The offering, undertaking, or agreeing to cure or treat disease by a secret method, procedure, treatment, or medicine, or the treating, operating, or prescribing for any health condition by a method, means, or procedure which the licensee refuses to divulge upon demand of the disciplining authority;

(20) The willful betrayal of a practitioner-patient privilege as recognized by law;

(21) Violation of chapter 19.68 RCW;

(22) Interference with an investigation or disciplinary proceeding by willful misrepresentation of facts before the disciplining authority or its authorized representative, or by the use of threats or harassment against any patient or witness to prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or any other legal action, or by the use of financial inducements to any patient or witness to prevent or attempt to prevent him or her from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding;

(23) Current misuse of:
(a) Alcohol;
(b) Controlled substances; or
(c) Legend drugs;
(24) Abuse of a client or patient or sexual contact with a client or patient;
(25) Acceptance of more than a nominal gratuity, hospitality, or subsidy offered by a representative or vendor of medical or health-related products or services intended for patients, in contemplation of a sale or for use in research publishable in professional journals, where a conflict of interest is presented, as defined by rules of the disciplining authority, in consultation with the department, based on recognized professional ethical standards;
(26) Performing conversion therapy on a patient under age eighteen.