

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2022 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/SB 566 — Mental Health Professional Licensure

by Health Policy Committee and Senator Gruters

The bill amends the minimum education requirements for licensure as a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or a mental health counselor in s. 491.005, F.S.

The bill addresses an unintended consequence of ch. 2020-133, L.O.F., by allowing marriage and family therapy applicants who graduated from a program not accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (CAMFTE), or from a Florida university program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), on or after July 1, 2020, when ch. 2020-133, L.O.F., took effect, to apply for licensure.

Under the bill, marriage and family therapy graduates will have until September 1, 2027, to complete one of three options to meet the minimum education requirements for licensure by earning a master's degree:

- In marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by the CAMFTE;
- With a major emphasis in marriage and family therapy or a closely related field from a university program accredited by the CACREP and graduate courses approved by the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling; or
- With a major emphasis in marriage and family therapy or a closely related field, with a degree conferred before September 1, 2027, from an institutionally accredited college or university.

The bill updates the education requirements for marriage and family therapists in reference to accreditation by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), which was dissolved in 1997. The bill amends the statute to reference CORPA's successor organization, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or its successors.

The bill also amends the minimum education requirements for licensure as a mental health counselor to include a master's degree from a program accredited by the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council, or an equivalent accrediting body, as a degree that qualifies an applicant for licensure.

The bill deletes obsolete provisions regarding purchases of examinations by the Department of Health for clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists. The bill revises the nomenclature for the accrediting authorities for marriage and family therapists and mental health counselors from a "regional" accrediting body to an "institutional" accrediting body, in order to align with the U.S. Department of Education's current vernacular and eliminate any perceived differences between regional and national accrediting bodies.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0