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## HOUSE BILL NO. 2721

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health  
on February 16, 1997)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Darner)

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 8.01-581.13, 38.2-3412.1, 54.1-2400.1, 54.1-3500, 54.1-3501, 54.1-3503, 54.1-3504, 54.1-3505, and 54.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 35 of Title 54.1 an article numbered 1.1, consisting of sections numbered 54.1-3507 and 54.1-3508, relating to licensure of substance abuse treatment practitioners.*

Whereas, HB 1466 of 1996, relating to licensure of substance abuse treatment professionals, was passed by both houses of the General Assembly of Virginia; and

Whereas, HB 1466 became Chapter 1036 of the 1996 Acts of Assembly; and

Whereas, the provisions of the third enactment of HB 1466 required that the bill's other provisions be reenacted by the 1997 Session of the General Assembly in order to become effective; and

Whereas, although many revisions and compromises have been made in the present bill and this bill relates only to licensure of substance abuse treatment practitioners, the primary concepts remain as set forth in HB 1466 of 1996; now, therefore,

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 8.01-581.13, 38.2-3412.1, 54.1-2400.1, 54.1-3500, 54.1-3501, 54.1-3503, 54.1-3504, 54.1-3505, and 54.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 35 of Title 54.1 an article numbered 1.1, consisting of sections numbered 54.1-3507 and 54.1-3508, as follows:**

§ 8.01-581.13. Civil immunity for certain health professionals and health profession students serving as members of certain entities.

A. For the purposes of this subsection, "health professional" means any certified substance abuse counselor, clinical psychologist, applied psychologist, school psychologist, dentist, licensed professional counselor, *licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, marriage and family therapist*, optometrist, physician, chiropractor, podiatrist, or veterinarian who is actively engaged in the practice of his profession.

Unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from such health professional's bad faith or malicious intent, any health professional, as defined in this subsection, shall be immune from civil liability for any act, decision or omission resulting from his duties as a member or agent of any entity which functions primarily (i) to investigate any complaint that a physical or mental impairment, including alcoholism or drug addiction, has impaired the ability of any such health professional to practice his profession and (ii) to encourage, recommend and arrange for a course of treatment, if deemed appropriate, or (iii) to review the duration of patient stays in health facilities or delivery of professional services for the purpose of promoting the most efficient use of available health facilities and services, the adequacy and quality of professional services, or the reasonableness or appropriateness of charges made by or on behalf of such health professionals. Such entity shall have been established pursuant to a federal or state law, or by one or more public or licensed private hospitals, or a relevant health professional society, academy or association affiliated with the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, the American Pharmaceutical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Podiatric Medical Association, the American Society of Hospitals and Pharmacies, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association for Counseling and Development, the American Optometric Association, International Chiropractic Association, the American Chiropractic Association, *the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy* or a governmental agency.

B. Unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from such pharmacist's or nurse's bad faith or malicious intent, any licensed pharmacist or nurse who is actively engaged in the practice of his profession shall be immune from civil liability for any act, decision or omission resulting from his duties while serving as a member or agent of any entity which functions primarily (i) to investigate any complaint that a physical or mental impairment, including alcoholism or drug addiction, has impaired the ability of any pharmacist or nurse to practice his profession and (ii) to encourage, recommend and arrange for a course of treatment, if deemed appropriate.

C. For the purposes of this subsection, "health profession student" means a student in good standing who is enrolled in an accredited school, program, or curriculum in clinical psychology, *counseling*, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, chiropractic, *marriage and family therapy*, substance abuse *counseling*, or veterinary medicine and has received training relating to substance abuse.

Unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from such health profession student's bad faith or

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malicious intent, any health profession student, as defined in this subsection, shall be immune from civil liability for any act, decision, or omission resulting from his duties as a member of an entity established by the institution of higher education in which he is enrolled or a professional student's organization affiliated with such institution which functions primarily (i) to investigate any complaint of a physical or mental impairment, including alcoholism or drug addiction, of any health profession student and (ii) to encourage, recommend, and arrange for a course of treatment, if deemed appropriate.

D. The immunity provided hereunder shall not extend to any person with respect to actions, decisions or omissions, liability for which is limited under the provisions of the federal Social Security Act or amendments thereto.

§ 38.2-3412.1. Coverage for mental health and substance abuse services.

A. As used in this section:

"Adult" means any person who is nineteen years of age or older.

"Alcohol or drug rehabilitation facility" means a facility in which a state-approved program for the treatment of alcoholism or drug addiction is provided. The facility shall be either (i) licensed by the State Board of Health pursuant to Chapter 5 (§ 32.1-123 et seq.) of Title 32.1 or by the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board pursuant to Chapter 8 (§ 37.1-179 et seq.) of Title 37.1 or (ii) a state agency or institution.

"Child or adolescent" means any person under the age of nineteen years.

"Inpatient treatment" means mental health or substance abuse services delivered on a twenty-four-hour per day basis in a hospital, alcohol or drug rehabilitation facility, an intermediate care facility or an inpatient unit of a mental health treatment center.

"Intermediate care facility" means a licensed, residential public or private facility that is not a hospital and that is operated primarily for the purpose of providing a continuous, structured twenty-four-hour per day, state-approved program of inpatient substance abuse services.

"Medication management visit" means a visit no more than twenty minutes in length with a licensed physician or other licensed health care provider with prescriptive authority for the sole purpose of monitoring and adjusting medications prescribed for mental health or substance abuse treatment.

"Mental health services" means treatment for mental, emotional or nervous disorders.

"Mental health treatment center" means a treatment facility organized to provide care and treatment for mental illness through multiple modalities or techniques pursuant to a written plan approved and monitored by a physician, clinical psychologist, or a psychologist licensed to practice in this Commonwealth. The facility shall be (i) licensed by the Commonwealth, (ii) funded or eligible for funding under federal or state law, or (iii) affiliated with a hospital under a contractual agreement with an established system for patient referral.

"Outpatient treatment" means mental health or substance abuse treatment services rendered to a person as an individual or part of a group while not confined as an inpatient. Such treatment shall not include services delivered through a partial hospitalization or intensive outpatient program as defined herein.

"Partial hospitalization" means a licensed or approved day or evening treatment program that includes the major diagnostic, medical, psychiatric and psychosocial rehabilitation treatment modalities designed for patients with mental, emotional, or nervous disorders, and alcohol or other drug dependence who require coordinated, intensive, comprehensive and multi-disciplinary treatment. Such a program shall provide treatment over a period of six or more continuous hours per day to individuals or groups of individuals who are not admitted as inpatients. Such term shall also include intensive outpatient programs for the treatment of alcohol or other drug dependence which provide treatment over a period of three or more continuous hours per day to individuals or groups of individuals who are not admitted as inpatients.

"Substance abuse services" means treatment for alcohol or other drug dependence.

"Treatment" means services including diagnostic evaluation, medical psychiatric and psychological care, and psychotherapy for mental, emotional or nervous disorders or alcohol or other drug dependence rendered by a hospital, alcohol or drug rehabilitation facility, intermediate care facility, mental health treatment center, a physician, psychologist, clinical psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional counselor, *licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, marriage and family therapist* or clinical nurse specialist who renders mental health services. Treatment for physiological or psychological dependence on alcohol or other drugs shall also include the services of counseling and rehabilitation as well as services rendered by a state certified alcoholism, drug, or substance abuse counselor employed by a facility or program licensed to provide such treatment.

B. Each individual and group accident and sickness insurance policy or individual and group subscription contract providing coverage on an expense-incurred basis for a family member of the insured or the subscriber shall provide coverage for inpatient and partial hospitalization mental health and substance abuse services as follows:

1. Treatment for an adult as an inpatient at a hospital, inpatient unit of a mental health treatment

center, alcohol or drug rehabilitation facility or intermediate care facility for a minimum period of twenty days per policy or contract year.

2. Treatment for a child or adolescent as an inpatient at a hospital, inpatient unit of a mental health treatment center, alcohol or drug rehabilitation facility or intermediate care facility for a minimum period of twenty-five days per policy or contract year.

3. Up to ten days of the inpatient benefit set forth in subdivisions 1 and 2 of this subsection may be converted when medically necessary at the option of the person or the parent, as defined in § 16.1-336, of a child or adolescent receiving such treatment to a partial hospitalization benefit applying a formula which shall be no less favorable than an exchange of 1.5 days of partial hospitalization coverage for each inpatient day of coverage. An insurance policy or subscription contract described herein which provides inpatient benefits in excess of twenty days per policy or contract year for adults or twenty-five days per policy or contract year for a child or adolescent may provide for the conversion of such excess days on the terms set forth in this subdivision.

4. The limits of the benefits set forth in this subsection shall not be more restrictive than for any other illness, except that the benefits may be limited as set out in this subsection.

5. This subsection shall not apply to short-term travel, accident only, limited or specified disease policies or contracts, nor to policies or contracts designed for issuance to persons eligible for coverage under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, known as Medicare, or any other similar coverage under state or federal governmental plans.

C. Each individual and group accident and sickness insurance policy or individual and group subscription contract providing coverage on an expense-incurred basis for a family member of the insured or the subscriber shall also provide coverage for outpatient mental health and substance abuse services as follows:

1. A minimum of twenty visits for outpatient treatment of an adult, child or adolescent shall be provided in each policy or contract year.

2. The limits of the benefits set forth in this subsection shall be no more restrictive than the limits of benefits applicable to physical illness; however, the coinsurance factor applicable to any outpatient visit beyond the first five of such visits covered in any policy or contract year shall be at least fifty percent.

3. For the purpose of this section, medication management visits shall be covered in the same manner as a medication management visit for the treatment of physical illness and shall not be counted as an outpatient treatment visit in the calculation of the benefit set forth herein.

4. For the purpose of this subsection, if all covered expenses for a visit for outpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment apply toward any deductible required by a policy or contract, such visit shall not count toward the outpatient visit benefit maximum set forth in the policy or contract.

5. This subsection shall not apply to short-term travel, accident only, or limited or specified disease policies or contracts, nor to policies or contracts designed for issuance to persons eligible for coverage under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, known as Medicare, or any other similar coverage under state or federal governmental plans.

D. The requirements of this section shall apply to all insurance policies and subscription contracts delivered, issued for delivery, reissued, or extended, or at any time when any term of the policy or contract is changed or any premium adjustment made.

§ 54.1-2400.1. Mental health service providers; duty to protect third parties; immunity.

A. As used in this section:

"Certified substance abuse counselor" means a person certified to provide substance abuse counseling in a state-approved public or private substance abuse program or facility.

"Client" or "patient" means any person who is voluntarily or involuntarily receiving mental health services or substance abuse services from any mental health service provider.

"Clinical psychologist" means a person who practices clinical psychology as defined in § 54.1-3600.

"Clinical social worker" means a person who practices social work as defined in § 54.1-3700.

"Licensed practical nurse" means a person licensed to practice practical nursing as defined in § 54.1-3000.

"Licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner" means any person licensed to engage in the practice of substance abuse treatment as defined in § 54.1-3500.

"Marriage and family therapist" means a person licensed to engage in practice of marriage and family therapy as defined in § 54.1-3500.

"Mental health professional" means a person who by education and experience is professionally qualified and licensed in Virginia to provide counseling interventions designed to facilitate an individual's achievement of human development goals and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses which interfere with mental health and development.

"Mental health service provider" or "provider" refers to any of the following: (i) a person who provides professional services as a certified substance abuse counselor; clinical psychologist, clinical

183 social worker, *licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner*, licensed practical nurse, *marriage and*  
184 *family therapist*, mental health professional, physician, professional counselor, psychologist, registered  
185 nurse, school psychologist, or social worker; (ii) a professional corporation, all of whose shareholders or  
186 members are so licensed; or (iii) a partnership, all of whose partners are so licensed.

187 "Professional counselor" means a person who practices counseling as defined in § 54.1-3500.

188 "Psychologist" means a person who practices psychology as defined in § 54.1-3600.

189 "Registered nurse" means a person licensed to practice professional nursing as defined in  
190 § 54.1-3000.

191 "School psychologist" means a person who practices school psychology as defined in § 54.1-3600.

192 "Social worker" means a person who practices social work as defined in § 54.1-3700.

193 B. A mental health service provider has a duty to take precautions to protect third parties from  
194 violent behavior or other serious harm only when the client has orally, in writing, or via sign language,  
195 communicated to the provider a specific and immediate threat to cause serious bodily injury or death to  
196 an identified or readily identifiable person or persons, if the provider reasonably believes, or should  
197 believe according to the standards of his profession, that the client has the intent and ability to carry out  
198 that threat immediately or imminently. If the third party is a child, in addition to taking precautions to  
199 protect the child from the behaviors in the above types of threats, the provider also has a duty to take  
200 precautions to protect the child if the client threatens to engage in behaviors that would constitute  
201 physical abuse or sexual abuse as defined in § 18.2-67.10. The duty to protect does not attach unless the  
202 threat has been communicated to the provider by the threatening client while the provider is engaged in  
203 his professional duties.

204 C. The duty set forth in subsection B is discharged by a mental health service provider who takes  
205 one or more of the following actions:

206 1. Seeks civil commitment of the client under Chapter 2 (§ 37.1-63 et seq.) of Title 37.1.

207 2. Makes reasonable attempts to warn the potential victims or the parent or guardian of the potential  
208 victim if the potential victim is under the age of eighteen.

209 3. Makes reasonable efforts to notify a law-enforcement official having jurisdiction in the client's or  
210 potential victim's place of residence or place of work, or place of work of the parent or guardian if the  
211 potential victim is under age eighteen, or both.

212 4. Takes steps reasonably available to the provider to prevent the client from using physical violence  
213 or other means of harm to others until the appropriate law-enforcement agency can be summoned and  
214 takes custody of the client.

215 5. Provides therapy or counseling to the client or patient in the session in which the threat has been  
216 communicated until the mental health service provider reasonably believes that the client no longer has  
217 the intent or the ability to carry out the threat.

218 D. A mental health service provider shall not be held civilly liable to any person for:

219 1. Breaching confidentiality with the limited purpose of protecting third parties by communicating the  
220 threats described in subsection B made by his clients to potential third party victims or law-enforcement  
221 agencies or by taking any of the actions specified in subsection C.

222 2. Failing to predict, in the absence of a threat described in subsection B, that the client would cause  
223 the third party serious physical harm.

224 3. Failing to take precautions other than those enumerated in subsection C to protect a potential third  
225 party victim from the client's violent behavior.

226 § 54.1-3500. Definitions.

227 As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

228 "Appraisal activities" means the exercise of professional judgment based on observations and  
229 objective assessments of a client's behavior to evaluate current functioning, diagnose, and select  
230 appropriate treatment required to remediate identified problems or to make appropriate referrals.

231 "Board" means the Board of *Licensed Professional Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists,*  
232 *and Substance Abuse Professionals.*

233 "Certified substance abuse counselor" means a person certified to provide substance abuse counseling  
234 in a state-approved public or private substance abuse program or facility.

235 "Counseling" means the therapeutic process of: (i) conducting assessments and diagnoses for the  
236 purpose of establishing treatment goals and objectives and (ii) planning, implementing, and evaluating  
237 treatment plans using treatment interventions to facilitate human development and to identify and  
238 remediate mental, emotional or behavioral disorders and associated distresses which interfere with mental  
239 health.

240 "Counseling treatment intervention" means those cognitive, affective, behavioral and systemic  
241 counseling strategies, techniques and methods common to the behavioral sciences that are specifically  
242 implemented in the context of a therapeutic relationship. Other treatment interventions include  
243 developmental counseling, guidance, and consulting to facilitate normal growth and development,  
244 including educational and career development.

"Licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner" means a person who: (i) is trained in and engages in the practice of substance abuse treatment with individuals or groups of individuals suffering from the effects of substance abuse or dependence, and in the prevention of substance abuse or dependence; and (ii) is qualified to provide advanced substance abuse treatment and independent, direct and unsupervised treatment to such individuals or groups of individuals, and to plan, evaluate, supervise, and direct substance abuse treatment provided by others.

"Marriage and family therapist" means a person trained in the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques.

"Marriage and family therapy" means the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques and delivery of services to individuals, couples, and families, singularly or in groups, for the purpose of treating such disorders.

"Practice of counseling" means rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, organizations, or the general public any service involving the application of principles, methods or procedures of the counseling profession, which shall include appraisal, counseling, and referral activities.

"Practice of marriage and family therapy" means the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques, which shall include assessment, treatment, and referral activities.

"Practice of substance abuse treatment" means rendering or offering to render substance abuse treatment to individuals, groups, organizations, or the general public.

"Professional counselor" means a person trained in counseling interventions designed to facilitate an individual's achievement of human development goals and remediating mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses which interfere with mental health and development.

"Referral activities" means the evaluation of data to identify problems and to determine advisability of referral to other specialists.

"Substance abuse" and "substance dependence" mean a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.

"Substance abuse treatment" means (i) the application of specific knowledge, skills, substance abuse treatment theory and substance abuse treatment techniques to define goals and develop a treatment plan of action regarding substance abuse or dependence prevention, education or treatment in the substance abuse or dependence recovery process and (ii) referrals to medical, social services, psychological, psychiatric or legal resources when such referrals are indicated.

§ 54.1-3501. Exemption from requirements of licensure.

The requirements for licensure in this chapter shall not be applicable to:

1. Persons who render services that are like or similar to those falling within the scope of the classifications or categories in this chapter, *including persons acting as members of substance abuse self-help groups*, so long as the recipients or beneficiaries of such services are not subject to any charge or fee, or any financial requirement, actual or implied, and the person rendering such service is not held out, by himself or otherwise, as a *person licensed practitioner under this chapter*.

2. The activities or services of a student pursuing a course of study in counseling, *substance abuse treatment* or marriage and family therapy in an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Board or under the supervision of a ~~practitioner~~*person* licensed or certified under this chapter, if such activities or services constitute a part of ~~his~~*the student's* course of study and are adequately supervised.

3. The activities, including marriage and family therapy ~~or~~, counseling, *or substance abuse treatment*, of rabbis, priests, ministers or clergymen of any religious denomination or sect when such activities are within the scope of the performance of their regular or specialized ministerial duties, and no separate charge is made or when such activities are performed, whether with or without charge, for or under auspices or sponsorship, individually or in conjunction with others, of an established and legally cognizable church, denomination or sect, and the person rendering service remains accountable to its established authority.

4. Persons employed as salaried employees or volunteers of the federal government, the Commonwealth, a locality, or of any agency established or funded, in whole or part, by any such governmental entity or of a private, nonprofit organization or agency sponsored or funded, in whole or part, by a community-based citizen group or organization. Any person who renders psychological services, as defined in Chapter 36 (§ 54.1-3600 et seq.) of this title, shall be subject to the requirements of that chapter. Any person who, in addition to the above enumerated employment, engages in an independent private practice shall not be exempt from the requirements for licensure.

5. Persons regularly employed by private business firms as personnel managers, deputies or assistants

so long as their counseling activities relate only to employees of their employer and in respect to their employment.

6. Persons regulated by this Board as professional counselors or persons regulated by another board within the Department of Health Professions who provide, within the scope of their practice, marriage and family therapy or, counseling to individuals or groups or substance abuse treatment to individuals or groups.

§ 54.1-3503. Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists and Substance Abuse Treatment Professionals.

The Board of *Licensed Professional Counselors and, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Substance Abuse Treatment Professionals* shall regulate the practice of counseling, *substance abuse treatment*, and marriage and family therapy.

The Board shall consist of ~~nineteen~~ *fourteen* members, ~~six of whom~~. *Twelve* shall be ~~professional counselors and one of whom shall be a marriage and family therapist~~ *professionals* licensed in Virginia, who shall represent the various specialties recognized in the profession, *and two shall be citizen members. Of the twelve professional members, eight shall be professional counselors, two shall be marriage and family therapists, and two shall be licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners.* The professional members of the Board shall include two full-time faculty members engaged in teaching counseling, *substance abuse treatment* or marriage and family therapy in an accredited college or university in this Commonwealth, *and two professional counselors* engaged in full-time private practice ~~and one certified substance abuse counselor~~. However, the marriage and family ~~therapist~~ *therapists* initially appointed to the Board shall not be required to be licensed, shall not be licensed by another board in the Department of Health Professions, and shall be a clinical ~~member~~ *members* of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. *In addition, two citizen members shall be appointed to the Board. The licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners initially appointed to the Board shall not be required to be licensed, shall not be licensed by another board in the Department of Health Professions, shall be active members of the Virginia Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors and shall have a master's degree in substance abuse or a substantially equivalent master's degree.*

The terms of the members of the Board shall be four years.

§ 54.1-3504. Nominations.

Nominations for professional members may be made from a list of at least three names for each vacancy submitted to the Governor by the Virginia Counselors Association, the Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors, *the Virginia Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors*, and the Virginia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. The Governor may notify such organizations of any professional vacancy other than by expiration. In no case shall the Governor be bound to make any appointment from among the nominees.

§ 54.1-3505. Specific powers and duties of the Board.

In addition to the powers granted in § 54.1-2400, the Board shall have the following specific powers and duties:

1. To cooperate with and maintain a close liaison with other professional boards and the community to ensure that regulatory systems stay abreast of community and professional needs.

2. To conduct inspections to ensure that licensees conduct their practices in a competent manner and in conformance with the relevant regulations.

3. To designate specialties within the profession.

4. To administer the certification of rehabilitation providers pursuant to Article 2 (§ 54.1-3510 et seq.) of this chapter, including prescribing fees for application processing, examinations, certification and certification renewal.

5. (Effective until July 1, 1999) To promulgate regulations for the voluntary certification of licensees as sex offender treatment providers. In promulgating such regulations, the Board shall consider the standards recommended by the Advisory Committee on Certified Practices pursuant to § 54.1-3610. The provisions of this subdivision shall expire on July 1, 1999.

6. To promulgate regulations for the qualifications, education, and experience for licensure of marriage and family therapists. The requirements for clinical membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the professional examination service's national marriage and family therapy examination may be considered by the Board in the promulgation of these regulations. The educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for marriage and family therapists shall not be less than the educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for professional counselors.

7. *To promulgate, subject to the requirements of Article 1.1 (§ 54.1-3507 et seq.) of this chapter, regulations for the qualifications, education, and experience for licensure of licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners. The requirements for membership in the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors and its national examination may be considered by the Board in the*

promulgation of these regulations. The educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners shall not be less than the educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for licensed professional counselors.

§ 54.1-3506. License required.

In order to engage in the practice of counseling or marriage and family therapy or in the independent practice of substance abuse treatment, as defined in this chapter, it shall be necessary to hold a license; however, no license shall be required to for the practice of marriage and family therapy or the independent practice of substance abuse treatment until six months after the effective date of regulations governing marriage and family therapy and substance abuse treatment, respectively, promulgated by the Board under subdivision 6 subdivisions 6 and 7 of § 54.1-3505. The Board of Professional Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists may issue a license, without examination, to for the practice of marriage and family therapy or the independent practice of substance abuse treatment to persons who hold a current and unrestricted license as a professional counselor within the Commonwealth and who meet the clinical and academic requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist or licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, respectively. The applicant for such license shall present satisfactory evidence of qualifications equal to those required of applicants for licensure as marriage and family therapists or licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners, respectively, by examination in the Commonwealth.

Any person who renders substance abuse treatment services as defined in this chapter and who is not licensed to do so, other than a person who is exempt pursuant to § 54.1-3501, shall render such services only when he is (i) under the supervision and direction of a person licensed under this chapter who shall be responsible for the services performed by such unlicensed person, or (ii) in compliance with the regulations governing a facility licensed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.

#### Article 1.1.

##### Licensed Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioners.

§ 54.1-3507. Scope of practice of and qualifications for licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners.

A. A licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner shall be qualified to (i) perform on an independent basis the substance abuse treatment functions of screening, intake, orientation, assessment, treatment planning, treatment, case management, substance abuse or dependence crisis intervention, client education, referral activities, record keeping, and consultation with other professionals; (ii) exercise independent professional judgment, based on observations and objective assessments of a client's behavior, to evaluate current functioning, to diagnose and select appropriate remedial treatment for identified problems, and to make appropriate referrals; and (iii) supervise, direct and instruct others who provide substance abuse treatment.

B. Pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board, an applicant for a license as a licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner shall submit evidence satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has (i) completed a specified number of hours of graduate studies, including a specified number of didactic substance abuse education courses at, and has received a master's degree in substance abuse or a substantially equivalent master's degree from, a college or university accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Board; and (ii) completed a specified number of hours of experience involving the practice of substance abuse treatment supervised by a licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, or by another person with substantially equivalent education, training and experience. The applicant shall also pass an examination, as required by the Board.

§ 54.1-3508. Licensure of certain persons possessing substantially equivalent qualifications, education or experience.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 54.1-3507, the Board may issue a license as a licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner to a person who, after the effective date of the regulations promulgated pursuant to subdivision 7 of § 54.1-3505, has applied for such a license and who, in the judgment of the Board, possesses qualifications, education or experience substantially equivalent to the requirements of § 54.1-3507; however, any such applicant shall have completed at least one year of supervised clinical experience in substance abuse treatment.