

State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 359

SENATE BILL NO. 540

By Lundberg

Substituted for: House Bill No. 995

By Beck

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 29; Title 33; Title 63 and Title 68, relative to mental health disorders.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 29, Chapter 34, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Mental health disorder" means a serious psychological condition, including, but not limited to, major depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, psychosis, bipolar disorder, personality disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, or any disorder found in the most current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; and

(2) "Psychotherapy" means an intervention for a mental health disorder by a licensed mental health professional.

(b)(1) A consumer is entitled to care from a competently qualified person when receiving care for a mental health disorder.

(2) A license is required under title 63 for a person to competently treat a mental health disorder. An unlicensed person is not competent to provide services that fall within any scope of practice for which a license is required under title 63 for treatment of a mental health disorder, and such treatment is illegal.

(c)(1) An unlicensed person may be civilly liable to the client if the unlicensed person knowingly offered psychotherapy services to treat a mental health disorder without being licensed as a mental health provider.

(2) The client may maintain an action to recover damages for the unlicensed psychotherapy treatment of a mental health disorder, including consideration paid to the unlicensed person, costs in recovering consideration paid, and reasonable attorney's fees as determined by the court.

(d) The following persons are exempt from this section:

(1) Clergy who are not being compensated on a fee-for-service basis;

(2) Students and practitioners in training when the student or practitioner is under the lawful supervision of a licensed healthcare professional;

(3) Persons holding a license under title 63 when acting within the lawful scope of practice;

(4) An unlicensed person operating under the supervision of a person holding a license under title 63, providing counseling or therapy services in a correctional facility;

(5) Any service provider at a homeless shelter, licensed behavioral health residential facility, hospital, or any state-operated agency or facility;

(6) State-contracted mobile crisis responders;

(7) An unlicensed person operating under the supervision of a person holding a license under title 63 providing counseling or therapy services in a community mental health center; and

(8) Any person providing peer counseling or social services not on a fee-for-service basis.


(e) This section does not expand or restrict the scope of practice for any person holding a license under title 63.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 24, 2019


RANDY McNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


GLEN CASADA, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 10th day of May 2019


BILL LEE, GOVERNOR