

HB 2319 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Kim To, Fiscal Administrative Supervisor

Meeting Dates: 3/22, 4/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Merges the administration and centralized services of the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists with the State Board of Psychologist Examiners and names this combined agency the Oregon Mental Health Regulatory Agency. The boards will continue to maintain separate authority over consumer protection and determining the qualifications of their respective regulated professions. The two boards will jointly appoint the director for the Oregon Mental Health Regulatory Agency, who will serve at the direction of the Board. Becomes operative on January 1, 2018. Declares emergency; effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Fiscal impact

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In October of 2013, the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists and the State Board of Psychologist Examiners entered into an interagency agreement to establish a pilot project to share the same Executive Director and Management Analyst positions. The boards agreed to cooperate and share resources while still maintaining their independence as regulatory boards for their respective professions. The project was deemed successful and was renewed for the 2015-17 biennium; however, there is still potential for more efficiencies to better serve the public.

The boards evaluated the results of the project and jointly recommended, with the support of the Governor, the Chief Financial Office, and the Legislative Fiscal Office to bring the administration of both boards under one agency. HB 2319 creates the Mental Health Regulatory Agency to provide the administrative and centralized services for the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists and the State Board of Psychologist Examiners under one joint director.

The Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists oversees a licensing program for Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT). The Board also registers interns who are completing work experience requirements for LPC and LMFT licensure. The eight-member board is appointed by the Governor and composed of three licensed professional counselors, two licensed marriage and family therapists, one faculty from a related program, and two public members.

The Board of Psychologist Examiners ensures the ethical and legal practice of psychology by overseeing a licensing programs for Licensed Psychologists. The nine-member board consists of six licensed psychologists and three members of the public not associated with the profession. All members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate to three-year terms.

This merging of the administrative and centralized services of these two boards does not affect statutes relating to the two boards' separate regulatory authority over their respective professions. In addition, this merging of the administrative and centralized services of these two boards does not affect the certification or regulatory oversight of any other practicing mental or behavioral health professionals.