



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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November 9, 2020

The Honorable Annette Cleveland, Chair  
Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee  
Post Office Box 40466  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0466

The Honorable Eileen Cody, Chair  
House Health Care and Wellness Committee  
Post Office Box 40600  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Senator Cleveland and Representative Cody:

This report fulfills the requirements of [RCW 18.225.800](#), which directs the Department of Health (department) to annually report, through 2020, the number of times mental health providers<sup>1</sup> with an associate's license renew their credential four, five, and six times. We submitted our first report in October 2014.

### **Major Findings**

In state fiscal year 2020, 86.7 percent of those who obtained their mental health provider licensure did so with four or fewer renewals of their associate license. Another 8.1 percent did so with 5 renewals and 5.0 percent with 6 renewals<sup>2</sup>.

### **Background**

The department began issuing associate licenses for mental health professions in July 2009. At that time, an associate license was limited to no more than four times. This meant associates had five years (initial associate licensure plus four annual renewals) to complete the additional education and supervisory requirements to apply for licensure as a mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, advanced social worker, or independent clinical social worker.

In 2013, the [House Bill 1213](#) expanded the number of renewals allowed for an associate license from four to six. The bill also directed the department to submit an annual report to help the legislature assess whether these expanded limits on associate licensure renewals remain adequate.

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<sup>1</sup> Mental Health providers include Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Advanced Social Workers, and Independent Clinical Social Workers.

<sup>2</sup> The department discovered a system error that allowed some licensees to renew more than the limit allows before obtaining full licensure. This error accounts for the remaining 0.1%. This system error has been corrected.

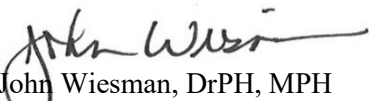
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**Data**

- Table 1 offers the number of times an associate renewed their license before obtaining a full license.
- Table 2 shows the number of associate license renewals by profession and fiscal year.

Please contact James Chaney, the executive director of mental health professions, at 360-236-4912 or [ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,



John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH  
Secretary of Health

cc: Members, House Health Care and Wellness Committee  
Members, Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee  
Amber Leaders, Governor's Office  
Kristin Peterson, Department of Health  
James Chaney, Department of Health

**Table 1.**  
**Full Licensees: Times Renewed Prior to Obtaining Full Licensure,**  
**Professionals Licensed Under Chapter 18.225 RCW**  
**by Profession and State Fiscal Year**

<b>Associate Profession</b>	<b>Times Renewed</b>	<b>SFY 14</b>	<b>SFY 15</b>	<b>SFY 16</b>	<b>SFY 17</b>	<b>SFY 18</b>	<b>SFY 19</b>	<b>SFY 20</b>
Mental Health Counselor	Three or fewer	NA	203	245	288	258	365	341
	Four		35	32	26	21	42	31
	Five		2	28	8	19	23	22
	Six		0	0	18	9	22	11
	<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>405</b>
Marriage and Family Therapist	Three or fewer	NA	44	60	69	80	85	77
	Four		7	5	11	7	11	5
	Five		0	7	4	6	3	4
	Six		0	0	4	4	3	4
	<b>Total</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>90</b>
Advanced Social Worker	Three or fewer	NA	6	10	6	7	7	7
	Four		3	2	0	1	2	0
	Five		1	6	0	2	1	2
	Six		0	0	1	2	2	2
	<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
Independent Clinical Social Worker	Three or fewer	NA	70	85	81	106	166	92
	Four		37	20	24	39	39	49
	Five		9	16	10	26	18	28
	Six		0	3	16	14	7	18
	<b>Total</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>187</b>
Grand Total – Full Licensure	Three or fewer	271	323	400	444	451	623	517
	Four	14	82	59	61	68	94	85
	Five	1	12	57	22	53	45	56
	Six	0	0	3	39	29	34	35
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>602<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>797<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>694<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>3</sup> During the production of the 2019 report, the department discovered a system error allowing some licensees to renew more than the limit allows before obtaining full licensure. The department corrected this error on October 1, 2019.

**Table 2.**  
**Number of Associate License Renewals**  
**by Profession and State Fiscal Year**

<b>Associate Profession</b>	<b>Times Renewed</b>	<b>SFY 14</b>	<b>SFY 15</b>	<b>SFY 16</b>	<b>SFY 17</b>	<b>SFY 18</b>	<b>SFY 19</b>	<b>SFY 20</b>
Mental Health Counselor	Three or fewer	1,419	1,388	1,722	2,108	2,493	2,965	3,380
	Four	250	233	245	299	364	413	449
	Five	5	190	139	134	166	223	247
	Six	0	7	139	211	264	310	361
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>2,245</b>	<b>2,752</b>	<b>3,287</b>	<b>3,911</b>	<b>4,437</b>
Marriage and Family Therapist	Three or fewer	283	389	483	620	757	885	977
	Four	216	50	57	77	90	106	124
	Five	0	44	37	39	55	60	70
	Six	0	1	26	42	50	69	79
	<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,250</b>
Advanced Social Worker	Three or fewer	238	125	151	157	191	225	271
	Four	61	28	21	37	34	33	32
	Five	1	55	33	22	37	38	39
	Six	0	4	46	64	68	85	95
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>437</b>
Independent Clinical Social Worker	Three or fewer	979	930	1,182	1,465	1,703	2,010	2,262
	Four	193	179	191	255	301	404	450
	Five	7	154	124	141	186	219	271
	Six	0	10	114	168	219	285	331
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,179</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>1,611</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>2,409</b>	<b>2,918</b>	<b>3,314</b>
<b>Grand Total - All Renewals</b>		<b>3,652</b>	<b>3,787</b>	<b>4,710</b>	<b>5,839</b>	<b>6,986<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>8,346<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>9,446<sup>4</sup></b>

<sup>4</sup> During the production of the 2019 report, the department discovered a system error allowing some licensees to renew more than the limit allows before obtaining full licensure. The department corrected this error on October 1, 2019