

Report to the Washington State Legislature and the
Washington State Military Transition Council

Military and Military- Affiliated Licensure Streamlining

December 2019

RCW 73.04.150

Office of Health Professions
Health Systems Quality Assurance



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Executive Summary

[RCW 73.04.150](#) requires the Department of Health (department) to provide regular reports to the legislature and Washington State Military Council (military council) updating them on progress with implementing [chapter 18.340 RCW](#) and [chapter 32, laws of 2011](#)¹. These statutes streamline licensing processes for military service members and their spouses. The department is required to submit a written report to the legislature and military council biennially beginning in 2018. This is the second biennial report, which provides an update for the 2017-19 biennium.

The department's significant updates for the 2017-19 biennium include:

- The department's military liaison worked closely with the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to implement more streamlined application processes for airmen at skill level 5 (journeyman) or above seeking to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN) by examination. This included coordinating with Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)² to receive transcripts electronically. The department issued 26 LPN credentials to airmen in this biennium.³
- The department continued to expedite applications of current and former military personnel, military spouses, and registered domestic partners seeking health care credential(s). The department issued 194 credentials⁴ to military personnel, and 1,574 credentials to military spouses and registered domestic partners in the latest biennium.

¹ Codified in multiple health profession chapters of Title 18 RCW.

² The CCAF is a federally-chartered, regionally accredited, academic institution of higher learning. The CCAF offers two-year associate of applied science (AAS) degrees in association with Air University.

³ After the biennium ended, the nursing commission published a [newsletter article](#) regarding the collaboration with CCAF. This resulted in a subsequent spike in LPN applications by airmen. Ten applications are pending.

⁴ These numbers include only applicants who select on the application that they are military-trained. Professionals who receive their medical training through traditional, civilian institutions of higher learning are not included.

Introduction

According to the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), about 552,291 veterans, 60,972 active duty personnel, 18,228 Guard or Reserve members, and 2 million military family members reside in Washington.⁵ Helping veterans and eligible family members receive health care credentials and gain meaningful employment remains a high priority for the department. It is committed to creating and sustaining processes to streamline credentialing for this population.

In 2011, the legislature passed legislation addressing military and military-affiliated licensing and credentialing:

- [Chapter 18.340 RCW](#) required all board, commission, or committee-regulated professions to establish expedited licensing procedures for military spouses or registered domestic partners.
- [Chapter 32, Laws of 2011⁶](#) required the department to evaluate military education, training, and experience, and allows this experience to meet state licensing standards for the profession unless it is not substantially equivalent.

Progress to Date

The department's progress to date includes:

- **Creating a health services consultant (military liaison) position in the department**
 - Since 2013, the military liaison has acted as facilitator for service members and eligible family members seeking health profession credentials the department issues. The liaison collaborates with internal and external workgroups, state and federal partners, and other vested stakeholders to identify and remove credentialing barriers, and to streamline application processes. The military liaison also performs community outreach, targeting education, licensing and recruitment opportunities.
- **Military credentialing opportunities**
 - The department developed an automated health profession "[military to civilian crosswalk](#)." This crosswalk allows service members to identify health professions in Washington whose requirements for licensure are substantially equivalent to military education, training and experience.
 - The department continues to update processes to assist current and former military personnel seeking expedited health care credential(s). During the 2017-19 biennium, the department issued 617 health care credentials to military-

⁵ "Veterans Statistics Spreadsheet," Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.dva.wa.gov/veterans-statistics-spreadsheet>, accessed October 20, 2019.

⁶ Codified in multiple chapters of Title 18 RCW.

trained personnel. The agency averaged eight days to issue credentials on routine applications once it received all documentation.⁷

- The department established a secure, electronic pathway to receive Joint Service Transcripts⁸ directly from the military, which decreases processing times for military applications.
- A number of health professions have adopted military-to-civilian equivalency rules or procedures:
 - Expanded function dental auxiliary (U.S. Navy program only)
 - Home care aide
 - Licensed practical nurse (LPN)⁹
 - Medical assistant (including the categories of certified, hemodialysis technician, and phlebotomist)
 - Certified nursing assistant
 - Occupational therapy assistant
 - Pharmacy technician
 - Veterinary technician
 - All radiological professions, including cardiovascular invasive specialist and respiratory care practitioner.

Military spouse credentialing and expedited application processing opportunities

- The department adopted rules in 2012 ([WAC 246-12-051](#)) to issue temporary practice permits to spouses and registered domestic partners for all professions regulated through the department and not through a board or commission. A temporary practice permit allows a spouse or domestic partner to practice up to six months (180 days), while awaiting final application processing.
- All 17 boards and commissions have rules or procedures in place to expedite applications for military spouses and registered domestic partners. Many of these include temporary practice permits.
- During the 2017-19 biennium, the department issued 3,834 health care credentials to military spouses and registered domestic partners. The agency averaged eight days to issue credentials on routine applications once it received all documentation.¹⁰

⁷ See Appendix 1, Table 2.

⁸ The [Joint Services Transcript](#) (JST) provides a description of military schooling and work history in civilian language.

⁹ Equivalency rules or procedures exist for certain classifications in U.S. Army and Air Force.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2, Table 2.

Significant highlights for 2017-19

- The department continued to expedite applications of current and former military personnel seeking expedited health care credential(s),¹¹ and issued 194 health care credentials in the latest biennium. (See Appendix 1, Table 1)
- The department continued to expedite applications for military spouses and registered domestic partners for all health professions, resulting in the issuance of 2,121 health care credentials in the latest biennium. (See Appendix 2, Table 1)
- The military liaison worked closely with the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to implement more streamlined application processes for airmen at skill level 5 (journeyman) or above seeking to become a licensed practical nurse by examination. This includes coordinating with Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)¹² to receive transcripts electronically, which was not available before the latest biennium. The department issued 26 LPN credentials to airmen in this biennium.¹³
- The department's external [Military Resources webpage](#) underwent significant format changes to become more user-friendly; this includes a printable resources brochure that was updated in August 2019, and the addition of significant military legislative links to assist military population(s) in Washington.

Other Related Activities and Accomplishments

The department:

- Participates in or has participated in:
 - Joint Base Lewis-McChord American Job Center, Navy-Kitsap Bremerton, U.S. Coast Guard 13th District, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce/Hiring Our Heroes career-sponsored expositions;
 - Washington state's Veterans Employee Resource Group;
 - The Washington State Military Transition Council; and
 - The Office of Financial Management's (OFM) 2017 Veterans Recruitment Plan workgroup.
- Partners year-round with OFM, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, educational service districts, Washington Workforce Training Education and Coordinating Board, Department of Licensing, Department of Labor and Industries, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Washington Student Achievement Council, and other state agencies to support hiring veterans and military

¹¹ See Appendix 2, Table 3 and 4.

¹² The CCAF is a federally chartered, regionally accredited, academic institution of higher learning. The CCAF offers two-year associate of applied science (AAS) degrees in association with Air University.

¹³ After the biennium ended, the nursing commission published a [newsletter article](#) regarding the collaboration with CCAF. This resulted in a subsequent spike in LPN applications by airmen. Ten applications are pending.

spouses, education (pathways and apprenticeships), and general information-sharing events.

Department Goals for 2019 and Beyond

The department's goals for ensuring military equivalency and integration of military personnel and their families into Washington are to continue:

- Working with regulatory authorities to update military equivalency rules as needed;
- Reviewing and updating the department's "[military to civilian crosswalk](#)" to allow military personnel to compare their education and training skills with current health profession requirements;
- Assessing processes for military veterans, spouses, and registered domestic partners through internal review and customer feedback; and
- Working with internal and external stakeholders to establish formal electronic delivery of official CCAF transcripts for airmen seeking health care credentials to streamline the credentialing process.¹⁴

¹⁴ The military liaison contacts the school case-by-case and requests an electronic transcript when an applicant identifies having applied for a specific equivalency credential issued by the department.

Appendix 1

Table 1: Military Personnel Licenses Issued by Fiscal Year¹⁵

Group	Profession	2016	2017	2018	2019	15-17 Biennium	17- 19 Biennium	Total
Secretary	Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
	Counselor- Agency Affiliated Substance Use Disorder Professional Trainee	15	32	18	6	47	24	71
	Dental Hygiene	4	4	6	0	8	6	14
	Dental Hygiene	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Medical Assistant Certification	7	1	9	54	8	53	71
	Medical Assistant Registration	5	7	4	1	12	5	17
	Nursing Assistant Certification	0	0	2	16	0	18	18
	Nursing Assistant Registration	19	35	14	12	54	26	80
	Radiologic Technologist	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
	Recreational Therapist	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Respiratory Care Practitioner	1	0	0	2	1	2	3
	Surgical Technologist	17	12	9	4	29	13	42
X-Ray Technician	1	2	2	0	3	2	5	
	Secretary Total	69	93	66	98	162	164	326
Board	Occupational Therapy Assistant	0	0	0	3	0	3	3
	Physical Therapist Assistant	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Commission	Dentist	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Dental Assistant	8	13	6	4	21	10	31
	Pharmacy Assistant	1	1	0	0	2	0	2
	Pharmacy Technician	1	2	5	9	3	14	17
	Physician Assistant	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
	Board/ Commissions Total	10	16	12	18	26	30	56
Grand Total	All Professions	79	109	78	116	188	194	382

¹⁵ These numbers include only applicants who select on the application that they are military-trained. Current or retired military professionals who receive their training through traditional, civilian institutions of higher learning are not included.

Table 2: Timeliness of military credential issuance - Routine

Measures for Routine Applications¹⁶	2016	2017	2018	2019
Percent of military credentials issued within 14 days after receiving all required documents	99%	96%	89%	86%
Average days to issue military credential	5.4	10.3	7.6	9.6 ¹⁷
Number of applications	77	107	73	109

Table 3: Timeliness of military credential issuance – Exception/Non-Routine

Measures for Exception¹⁸ and Non-Routine Applications¹⁹	2016	2017	2018	2019
Percent of military credentials issued within 14 days after receiving all required documents	100%	50%	80%	71%
Average days to issue military credential	6.3	14.0	8.6	16.4
Number of applications	3	2	5	7

¹⁶ **Routine Applications:** Applications that have been thoroughly reviewed and vetted by the appropriate regulatory authority, and can be approved by credentialing staff.

¹⁷ The department received an increased number of applications early in 2018, at which time the credentialing unit was understaffed because of a low fund balance in the Health Professions Account. This caused delays in processing applications. In the 2018 supplemental budget, the legislature provided additional spending authority, allowing the department to hire additional staff to improve credentialing wait times.

¹⁸ **Exception Applications:** Credential applications where the applicant has a criminal background, open case or enforcement action on another credential, databank disciplinary history, any “yes” response to personal data questions, or where the applicant does not meet credentialing requirements. “Exception” application designation may also apply to an applicant who has not sufficiently responded to questions regarding the omission of a Social Security number on the application.

¹⁹ **Non-Routine Applications:** Applications are considered non-routine because of responses to personal data questions or questionable supporting documentation; in some instances, these may be required to go through the “exception” application process.

Appendix 2

Table 1: Licenses Issued to Military Spouses and Registered Domestic Partners by Fiscal Year

Group	Profession	2016	2017	2018	2019	15-17 Biennium	17- 19 Biennium	Total
Secretary	Advanced EMT	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
	Animal Massage Practitioner	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Athletic Trainer	2	0	2	1	2	3	5
	Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist	2	1	1	1	3	2	5
	Certified Behavior Technician	0	0	80	52	0	132	132
	Chemical Dependency Professional	1	2	1	3	3	4	7
	Chemical Dependency Professional Trainee	9	10	11	12	19	23	42
	Counselor, Agency Affiliated	45	74	58	50	119	108	227
	Dental Hygienist	3	9	17	12	12	29	41
	Dietitian/Nutritionist	4	5	7	7	9	14	23
	Dispensing Optician	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Dispensing Optician Apprentice	1	5	0	4	6	10	10
	East Asian Medicine Practitioner	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
	Emergency Medical Responder	1	1	1	0	2	1	3
	Emergency Medical Technician	6	34	23	29	40	52	92
	Genetic Counselor	1	1	1	0	2	1	3
	Home Care Aide	2	36	49	42	38	91	129
	Hypnotherapist	1	1	0	0	2	0	2
	Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst	0	0	2	6	0	8	8
	Licensed Behavior Analyst	0	0	13	10	0	23	23
	Marriage and Family Therapist	2	2	1	0	4	1	5
	Marriage and Family Therapist Associate	2	4	7	9	6	16	22
	Medical Assistant	100	211	159	177	311	336	647
	Medical Marijuana Consultant	0	11	0	2	11	2	13
	Medication Assistant Endorsement	0	2	0	2	2	2	4
	Mental Health Counselor	6	8	13	22	14	35	49
	Mental Health Counselor Associate	8	18	20	19	26	39	65
	Midwife	0	1	1	2	1	3	4
	Nursing Assistant	123	223	226	246	346	472	818
	Orthotics/ Prosthetics	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Paramedic	1	2	4	2	3	6	9
	Radiological Technologist	10	18	18	15	28	33	61
	Recreational Therapist	0	0	2	2	0	4	4
	Respiratory Care Practitioner	7	8	10	9	15	19	34
	Social Worker Advanced	0	0	3	1	0	4	4
	Social Worker Associate Advanced	2	2	4	5	4	9	13
Social Worker Associate Independent Clinical	10	14	18	19	24	37	61	
Social Worker Independent Clinical	3	7	5	9	10	14	24	
Surgical Technologist	9	8	21	9	17	30	47	
X-Ray Technician	3	0	9	4	3	13	16	
	Secretary Total	364	721	788	786	1,085	1,574	2,659

Board	Audiologist	1	3	3	1	4	4	8
	Massage Practitioner	11	24	17	20	35	37	72
	Naturopathic Physician	0	0	0	5	0	5	5
	Nursing Home Administrator	0	1	0	1	1	1	2
	Nursing Home Administrator Training Approval	1	0	1	0	1	1	2
	Occupational Therapist	7	4	8	7	11	15	26
	Occupational Therapy Assistant	1	6	6	10	7	16	23
	Optometrist	2	2	3	1	4	4	8
	Osteopathic Physician	2	5	5	13	7	18	25
	Physical Therapist	12	9	14	31	21	45	66
	Physical Therapist Assistant	4	4	9	10	8	19	27
	Podiatric Physician	0	1	0	1	1	1	2
	Psychologist	1	1	5	6	2	11	13
	Speech Language Pathologist	8	9	8	16	17	24	41
	Speech Language Pathology Assistant	0	2	0	3	2	3	5
	Veterinarian	1	8	2	2	9	4	13
	Veterinary Medication Clerk	5	13	13	10	18	23	41
	Veterinary Technician	1	3	6	4	4	10	14
	Commission	Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner	0	0	0	3	0	3
Chiropractic X-Ray Technician		1	2	1	1	3	2	5
Chiropractor		1	2	0	0	3	0	3
Dental Anesthesia Assistant		0	1	0	1	1	1	2
Dental Assistant		46	58	62	71	104	133	237
Dentist		6	6	10	8	12	18	30
Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary		0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Licensed Practical Nurse		0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Pharmacist		2	3	7	8	5	15	20
Pharmacist Intern		1	4	8	7	5	15	20
Pharmacy Assistant		29	58	29	43	87	72	159
Pharmacy Technician		9	20	14	18	29	32	61
Physician		0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Physician Assistant		0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Registered Nurse		0	0	0	11	0	11	11
	Board/ Commissions Total	152	249	231	316	401	547	948
GRAND TOTAL	All Professions	516	970	1,019	1,102	1,486	2,121	3,607

Table 2: Timeliness of Military Spouse credential issuance - Routine

Measures for Routine Applications	2016	2017	2018	2019
Percent of military spousal credentials issued within 14 days after receiving all documents	98%	92%	90%	86%
Average days to issue a credential to military service members	5.1	8.3	8.3	9.5
Number of applications	490	900	962	1042

Table 3: Timeliness of Military Spouse credential issuance - Exception/Non-Routine

Measures for Exception and Non-Routine Applications	2016	2017	2018	2019
Percent of military spousal credentials issued within 14 days after receiving all documents	100%	71%	72%	47%
Average days to issue military credential	3.0	13.4	13.1	18.9
Number of applications	26	70	57	60