



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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October 1, 2019

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 providers¹ 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 2019, 89.6 percent of those who obtained their mental health provider licensure did so with four or fewer renewals of their associate license. Another 5.1 percent did so with five renewals and 4.9 percent with six renewals².

Background

The department began issuing associate licenses for mental health professions in July 2009. At the time, an associate license could be renewed annually 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. At the same time, the department was directed to submit this annual report to help the legislature assess whether these expanded limits on associate licensure renewals remain adequate.

¹ Mental Health providers include: Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Advanced Social Workers, and Independent Clinical Social Workers.

² During the production of this report, the department discovered a system error which allowed two licensees to renew more than the limit allows before obtaining full licensure. The department is undergoing a thorough investigation into the cause of this error. This error accounts for the remaining 0.4 percent.

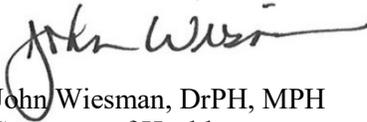
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Data

Table 1 shows the number of times associate licenses were renewed among those who are fully licensed by profession and fiscal year. 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 in the department's Office of Health Professions, at 360-236-4912 or 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 of Representatives Health Care and Wellness Committee
Members, Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee
Rashi Gupta, Governor's Office
Kristin Peterson, 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**

Associate Profession	Times Renewed	SFY 14	SFY 15	SFY 16	SFY 17	SFY 18	SFY 19
Mental Health Counselor	Three or fewer	NA	203	245	288	258	365
	Four		35	32	26	21	42
	Five		2	28	8	19	23
	Six		0	0	18	9	22
	Total		240	305	340	307	452
Marriage and Family Therapist	Three or fewer	NA	44	60	69	80	85
	Four		7	5	11	7	11
	Five		0	7	4	6	3
	Six		0	0	4	4	3
	Total		51	72	88	97	102
Advanced Social Worker	Three or fewer	NA	6	10	6	7	7
	Four		3	2	0	1	2
	Five		1	6	0	2	1
	Six		0	0	1	2	2
	Total		10	18	7	12	12
Independent Clinical Social Worker	Three or fewer	NA	70	85	81	106	166
	Four		37	20	24	39	39
	Five		9	16	10	26	18
	Six		0	3	16	14	7
	Total		116	124	131	185	230
Grand Total – Full Licensure	Three or fewer	271	323	400	444	451	623
	Four	14	82	59	61	68	94
	Five	1	12	57	22	53	45
	Six	0	0	3	39	29	34
	Total	286	417	519	566	602²	797³

³ During the production of this report, the department discovered a system error which allowed two licensees to renew more than the limit allows before obtaining full licensure. The department is undergoing a thorough investigation into the cause of this error.

Table 2.

Number of Associate License Renewals by Profession and State Fiscal Year

Associate Profession	Times Renewed	SFY 14	SFY 15	SFY 16	SFY 17	SFY 18	SFY 19
Mental Health Counselor	Three or fewer	1,419	1,388	1,722	2,108	2,493	2,965
	Four	250	233	245	299	364	413
	Five	5	190	139	134	166	223
	Six	0	7	139	211	264	310
	Total	1,674	1,818	2,245	2,752	3,287	3,911
Marriage and Family Therapist	Three or fewer	283	389	483	620	757	885
	Four	216	50	57	77	90	106
	Five	0	44	37	39	55	60
	Six	0	1	26	42	50	69
	Total	499	484	603	778	952	1,120
Advanced Social Worker	Three or fewer	238	125	151	157	191	225
	Four	61	28	21	37	34	33
	Five	1	55	33	22	37	38
	Six	0	4	46	64	68	85
	Total	300	212	251	280	330	381
Independent Clinical Social Worker	Three or fewer	979	930	1,182	1,465	1,703	2,010
	Four	193	179	191	255	301	404
	Five	7	154	124	141	186	219
	Six	0	10	114	168	219	285
	Total	1,179	1,273	1,611	2,029	2,409	2,918
Grand Total - All Renewals		3,652	3,787	4,710	5,839	6,986⁴	8,351³

⁴ The system error identified by the department also resulted in 8 associates receiving a seventh renewal in fiscal year 2018 and 21 associates receiving a seventh or eighth renewal in fiscal year 2019. The department is currently investigating and will report on the results of this investigation in a follow-up letter.