

Comment Report

HF 107

A bill for an act relating to supervision requirements for licensed marital and family therapists, mental health counselors, and social workers, and including effective date provisions.(See HF 485.)

Subcommittee Members: Osmundson-CH, Fry, Mascher

Date: 01/26/2021

Time: 04:30 PM

Location: RM 15

Name: Toni Larson

Comment: My name is Toni Larson. I am Director of Counseling for Lutheran Family Service. I have been a practicing social worker for 40 years. I support the proposed change to NOT REQUIRE that the supervision hours for licensure or renewal for licensure be required to be in person. I work for a small, private counseling agency that serves the entire state of Iowa. We have counselors located in the Quad Cities, Council Bluffs, Urbandale, Fort Dodge, Carroll, Jefferson and Manning. Because of increasing needs for mental health services, we are working to expand to other areas to meet these needs. Due to the rural expanse in Iowa, requiring inperson supervision is not feasible, practical or realistic which eliminates the potential for our agency to take on professionals working towards their licensure. Due to the pandemic, a large percentage of our counseling sessions are now being provided via telehealth. We have been able to reach clients in rural areas and in areas where we do not have a counselor available within a reasonable distance for faceto face sessions. I have been supervising my current counselors using a virtual platform since the start of the pandemic. The quality of the supervision sessions has not been adversely affected by utilizing the virtual platform. In summary, allowing supervision via a virtual or telephonic platform will allow more opportunities for those seeking licensure to obtain those hours within rural settings. It will also provide for the safety of supervisor and supervisees during pandemic conditions. The quality of the supervision will not be adversely affected.

Name: Renee Schulte

Comment: IMHCA thanks Rep Fry for bringing this bill forward and supports the bill for the following reasons:1. we can access more expertise in a particular area, covid has demonstrated that tele services are successful in accomplishing what inperson has also accomplished2. We are arguing for full parity of telehealth services, we should be consistent in allowing virtual supervision. We have argued that we are paying for a skill set and expertise and not a location or office.3. This will increase the ability for new practitioners to work in rural Iowa. However we are seeking answers to the following questions as we have a couple of concerns:1. Why does the number of supervision hours for LMHCs need to match social work?2. Is this bill necessary? Why do LMHCs need to be the same as social work their licenses are independent of one another.