

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 333
By: Zaffirini
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, Texas law sets the educational requirement to become a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC) at a high school degree, or its equivalent, and there is little structure governing the registration of interns. Strengthened licensure requirements and rules governing interns will allow Texas to benefit from substance abuse counselors who are highly trained. S.B. 333 increases the educational requirements for licensure as an LCDC by requiring an associate degree and course work that pertains to substance abuse. S.B. 333 also grants the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse authority over registering interns. The new requirements only apply to new applicants.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

Amends Section 504.001, Occupations Code, by adding Subdivision (3-a), to define "counselor intern."

Amends the heading to Chapter 504, Subchapter D, Occupations Code, to read as follows:
SUBCHAPTER D. LICENSE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 504, Occupations Code, by adding Section 504.1515 to require a person seeking a license as a chemical dependency counselor to register with the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) as a counselor intern by submitting, in a form acceptable to TCADA, certain items. TCADA is authorized to obtain criminal history record information relating to a counselor intern or an applicant for registration as a counselor intern from the Department of Public Safety and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Amends Section 504.152, Occupations Code, to increase the licensing requirements from a high school diploma or its equivalent to an associate or more advanced degree and to specify the completion of a certain number of hours in certain subjects. Deletes the requirement for 270 classroom hours of approved curricula.

Amends Section 504.153(a), Occupations Code, to include in the criteria for exemption from the requirement to have a commission approved course load, a degree beyond a baccalaureate degree.

Repealer: Section 504.057, Occupations Code (Criminal History Information for Counselor Interns.)

Authorizes a chemical dependency counselor licensed before this Act's effective date to renew that license without complying with the changes made by this Act. Provides that the changes in this Act only apply to an initial license application, except as provided by Subsection (c) of this section. Continues the effectiveness of previously existing law for license applications made before this Act's effective date. Makes application of this Act prospective.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2004.

