



AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EVALUATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL LICENSEES; CREATING A STANDARD REVIEW PROCESS FOR A MENTAL OR PHYSICAL EVALUATION REQUEST BY A BOARD OF A LICENSEE OR LICENSE APPLICANT; CREATING A STANDARD REVIEW PROCESS FOR A MENTAL OR PHYSICAL EVALUATION REQUEST BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY OF A LICENSEE OR LICENSE APPLICANT; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 37-3-323, 37-6-311, AND 37-12-322, MCA.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Mental and physical evaluations. (1) If the alternative health care board, board of behavioral health, board of veterinary medicine, or any board licensing medical practitioners defined in 37-2-101 has objective and reasonable belief that a licensee or license applicant presents a significant risk of substantial harm to public health and safety, the board may require an evaluation of the licensee or license applicant by an appropriate medical provider.

(2) The evaluation in subsection (1) must determine to what extent and how any existing mental or physical impairment or disability or use of controlled substances by the individual may impact the individual's performance of the profession or occupation with reasonable skill and safety. The factors to be considered include but are not limited to:

- (a) the duration of the risk;
- (b) the nature and severity of the potential harm;
- (c) the likelihood that the potential harm will occur; and
- (d) the imminence of the potential harm.

(3) The board may consider additional mental or physical evaluations and may base a proposed disciplinary or enforcement action on a single evaluation or the totality of any evaluations considered.

(4) The board may summarily suspend the license of or suspend processing the application of an individual who refuses to submit to the evaluation.

Section 2. Mental and physical evaluations. (1) If the department, on behalf of a health care program, has objective and reasonable belief that a licensee or license applicant presents a significant risk of substantial harm to public health and safety, the department may require an evaluation of the licensee or license applicant by an appropriate medical provider.

(2) The evaluation in subsection (1) must determine to what extent and how any existing mental or physical impairment or disability or use of controlled substances by the individual may impact the individual's performance of the profession or occupation with reasonable skill and safety. The factors to be considered include but are not limited to:

- (a) the duration of the risk;
- (b) the nature and severity of the potential harm;
- (c) the likelihood that the potential harm will occur; and
- (d) the imminence of the potential harm.

(3) The department may consider additional mental or physical evaluations and may base a proposed disciplinary or enforcement action on a single evaluation or the totality of any evaluations considered.

(4) The department may summarily suspend the license of or suspend processing the application of an individual who refuses to submit to the evaluation.

Section 3. Section 37-3-323, MCA, is amended to read:

"37-3-323. Suspension of license -- investigation. (1) The department may investigate whenever the department learns of a reason to suspect that a license applicant or a person having a license to practice medicine in this state:

(a) is mentally or physically unable to safely engage in the practice of medicine, has procured a license to practice medicine by fraud or misrepresentation or through mistake, has been declared incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction and has not later been lawfully declared competent, or has a condition that impairs the person's intellect or judgment to the extent that the condition incapacitates the person for the safe

performance of professional duties;

- (b) has engaged in unprofessional conduct;
- (c) has practiced medicine with a suspended or revoked license;
- (d) has had a license to practice medicine suspended or revoked by any licensing authority for reasons other than nonpayment of fees; or
- (e) while under probation has violated the terms of probation.

(2) The investigation must be for the purpose of determining the probability of the existence of these conditions or the commission of these offenses ~~and may, upon order of the board, include requiring the person to submit to a physical examination or a mental examination, or both, by a physician or physicians selected by the board or the board's representative if the board considers that the evaluation is in the best interests of the public.~~ The board may examine and scrutinize the ~~hospital~~ medical records and reports of a licensee or license applicant ~~as part of the examination~~ from examination as part of the investigation, and copies must be released to the board on written request. Any examination of a physician must be conducted by a physician approved by the board or the board's designee.

(3) If a person holding a license to practice medicine under this chapter is by a final order or adjudication of a court of competent jurisdiction adjudged to be mentally incompetent, to be addicted to the use of addictive substances, or to have been committed pursuant to 53-21-127, the person's license may be suspended by the board. The suspension continues until the licensee is found or adjudged by the court to be restored to reason or cured or until the person is discharged as restored to reason or cured and the person's professional competence has been proved to the satisfaction of the board."

Section 4. Section 37-6-311, MCA, is amended to read:

"37-6-311. Refusal or revocation of license -- investigation. (1) After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the board may deny, revoke, or refuse to renew a license to practice podiatry if the consensus of the board is that an applicant is not of good moral character or has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

- (2) The department may investigate whenever it is brought to its attention that a licensed podiatrist:
 - (a) is mentally or physically unable to engage safely in the practice of podiatry;
 - (b) has procured the license by fraud, misrepresentation, or through error;

- (c) has been declared incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction and has not later been lawfully declared competent;
 - (d) has a condition that impairs the licensee's intellect or judgment to the extent that it incapacitates the licensee in the safe performance of professional duties;
 - (e) has been found guilty of unprofessional conduct;
 - (f) has practiced podiatry while the license was suspended or revoked;
 - (g) has had the license suspended or revoked by any licensing authority for reasons other than nonpayment of fees; or
 - (h) while under probation has violated its terms.
- (3) The investigation must be for the purpose of determining the probability that the alleged conditions exist or that the alleged offenses were committed. ~~Upon order of the board, the investigation may include requiring the person to submit to a physical examination or a mental examination, or both, by a physician or physicians selected by the board if it appears to be in the best interest of the public that this evaluation be secured.~~ The board may examine the hospital medical records and reports of a licensee ~~as part of the examination~~ from the examination as part of the investigation, and copies must be released to the board on written request.
- (4) If a person holding a license to practice podiatry under this chapter is by a final order or adjudication of a court of competent jurisdiction determined to be mentally incompetent, to be addicted to the use of narcotics, or to have been committed pursuant to 53-21-127, the license may be suspended by the board. The suspension continues until the licensee is found by the court to be restored to reason or cured or until the licensee is discharged as restored to reason or cured and the licensee's professional competence has been proved to the satisfaction of the board."

Section 5. Section 37-12-322, MCA, is amended to read:

"37-12-322. Investigation of complaints. (1) The department may make an investigation whenever it is brought to its attention that there is reason to suspect that a person licensed to practice chiropractic:

- (a) has a mental or physical condition that renders the person unable to safely engage in the practice of chiropractic;

- (b) has been declared incompetent or has been committed pursuant to 53-21-127 by a court of competent jurisdiction and has not later been declared competent or released from supervision;
 - (c) has procured the license through mistake;
 - (d) has been guilty of unprofessional conduct;
 - (e) has practiced chiropractic while the license was suspended or revoked;
 - (f) has while under probation violated its terms.
- (2) The investigation must be for the purpose of determining the probability of the existence of these conditions or the commission of these offenses ~~and may, upon order of the board, include requiring the person to submit to a physical or mental examination, or both, by a physician or physicians selected by the board if it appears to be in the best interests of the public that this evaluation be secured.~~ The board may examine the hospital-medical records and reports of the licensee ~~as part of the examination from the examination as part of the investigation~~, and copies of these must be released to the board on written request."

Section 6. Codification instruction. (1) [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 37, chapter 1, part 3, and the provisions of Title 37, chapter 1, part 3, apply to [section 1].

(2) [Section 2] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 37, chapter 1, part 4, and the provisions of Title 37, chapter 1, part 4, apply to [section 2].

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 238, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE BILL NO. 238

INTRODUCED BY J. ETCHART

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