

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS REGARDING ACT 93**

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Act 93, 2024 Haw. Session Laws (Effective July 1, 2026) establishes a new category granting provisional licensure as an associate mental health counselor under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 453D.

An individual who has completed the educational requirements as specified in HRS §453D-7(a)(1) and (2), but who has not yet completed the post-graduate supervised experience required under HRS §453D-7(a)(3), may apply to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs for a provisional associate license to engage in the practice of mental health counseling under supervision.

Provisional associate licensure will be required for all individuals who are earning their post-graduate hours, effective July 1, 2026. The current exemption that permits practice as an MHC intern will expire on June 30, 2026. If an individual is still accruing hours on or after July 1, 2026, they must have obtained the associate license; otherwise, they will be in violation of the new law. There will be no exemption allowing individuals to earn post-graduate hours without associate licensure after this date.

The associate license authorizes the licensee to practice mental health counseling only while under the supervision of a licensed mental health counselor who meets the qualifications set forth in HRS §453D-7(a)(3). The license shall be valid for two years from the date of issuance and may be renewed once for an additional two-year period upon application and payment of the applicable fees. The licensee shall remain subject to all standards of conduct and disciplinary provisions contained in HRS Chapters 436B and 453D.

Applicants for the associate license must submit verification of graduation from an accredited educational institution in accordance with HRS §453D-7(a)(1) and verification of supervised practice or employment under a qualified licensed mental health counselor. The Department shall prescribe the application form and process for submission.

The provisional license established by Act 93 is intended as a provisional category to allow qualified individuals to obtain the post-graduate supervised experience required for full licensure as a mental health counselor under HRS §453D-7(a)(3). All provisions of HRS §453D-7 not amended by Act 93 remain in effect.