



# HB 1917/SB 2399

## Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ is provided by TLPCA to share clear and consistent information about HB 1917 / SB 2399 and the proposed licensure changes. It is intended to clarify what is changing, address common questions, and help counselors understand how these updates may impact their practice.



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### 1. Why is the MHSP designation being removed?

The MHSP designation is not used in other states and is not recognized nationally. Its removal reduces confusion for the public and aligns Tennessee with the nationally recognized Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential. Importantly, the **scope of practice currently associated with LPC/MHSP is not changing**—only the title is being simplified for clarity and consistency.

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### 2. Why is my LPC license now going to be called a Limited Practice Professional Counselor (LPPC)?

The current LPC license in Tennessee does not include the authority to diagnose or treat mental health disorders. Renaming it to **Limited Practice Professional Counselor (LPPC)** more accurately reflects the existing scope of practice and reduces confusion for the public, employers, and other professionals.

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### 3. Why was this change necessary?

This change was necessary to:

- Align Tennessee with **national licensure standards**
  - Support participation in the **Counseling Compact**, which uses the LPC title
  - Improve **public understanding** of counselor roles and qualifications
  - Address long-standing concerns that the current LPC title created confusion about scope of practice
  - Move toward a **clear, streamlined licensure structure**, with the long-term goal of a single license
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### 4. Will this affect my practice as an LPC/MHSP?

No. If you are currently licensed as an LPC/MHSP:

- Your **scope of practice remains the same**
- You will continue to diagnose and treat mental health disorders
- Your ability to practice independently is unchanged

The primary change is the **removal of the MHSP designation from the title**, not your professional role or authority.

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### 5. If I am currently an LPC, what do I need to do to upgrade to the new LPC license?

The amendment provides a **clear and accessible pathway** for current LPCs to upgrade. To qualify, individuals must:

- Be licensed as a Limited Practice Professional Counselor (LPPC), or an equivalent license from another state, for a minimum of two (2) years **or** have been licensed as an LPC prior to July 1, 2024;
- Complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of board-approved training specifically related to diagnosis, treatment, appraisal, and assessment of mental disorders; and
- Pass the **National Clinical Mental Health Counselors Examination (NCMHCE)** offered by the National Board for Certified Counselors.

Additional guidance will be shared as implementation details and timelines are finalized.

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## 6. Why do I need to take another exam?

The **National Clinical Mental Health Counselors Examination (NCMHCE)** is required to demonstrate competency in diagnosing and treating mental disorders. This exam is specifically designed to assess clinical decision-making and practice skills aligned with independent clinical licensure.

The goal is to ensure that those moving into the LPC role have the appropriate preparation for expanded clinical responsibilities, particularly related to diagnosis and treatment.

It is also important to note that this requirement represents a more accessible pathway compared to previous expectations. Prior upgrade pathways included an additional **1,000 hours of supervised clinical practice** and **50 hours of supervision**. The current approach reduces those barriers while still maintaining standards for clinical competence.

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## 7. Will this change reduce the counseling workforce?

No. The amendment is specifically designed to **preserve the current workforce** while creating clearer pathways for advancement. No existing providers are being removed.

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## 8. Does this change limit access to care?

No. The goal is to **improve access to care** by:

- Reducing confusion for clients seeking services
- Supporting workforce mobility through the Counseling Compact
- Creating clearer licensure pathways for future counselors

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## 9. How does this impact the Counseling Compact?

This change strengthens Tennessee's alignment with the **Counseling Compact**, which recognizes the LPC credential as being the highest level of licensure. This will:

- Align the TN license title with the Compact, which identifies the LPC as being highest level of independent licensure.
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- The scope of TN LPC does not meet the requirements for participation in the compact, thus causing confusion.
  - Expand opportunities for **interstate practice**
  - Increase access to **telehealth services**
  - Support recruitment and retention of counselors in Tennessee
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## 10. Why not keep both LPC and LPC/MHSP titles?

Maintaining multiple titles for similar roles creates confusion for the public and stakeholders. Moving toward a **single, clearly defined LPC credential** improves transparency, consistency, and alignment with national standards.

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## 11. What is the long-term goal of this change?

The long-term goal is to establish **one clearly defined professional license (LPC)** that:

- Reflects appropriate clinical training and scope
  - Aligns with national standards
  - Supports mobility and access to care
  - Reduces confusion for the public and the profession
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## 12. When will these changes take effect?

The timeline will depend on the legislative process and subsequent rulemaking. TLPCA will provide updates as implementation details and effective dates are finalized.

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## 13. What will happen to existing licenses under this amendment?

The amendment includes an automatic conversion process for current license holders. The Board will reissue licenses to align with the new structure.

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#### 14. What happens if I was certified as a professional counselor before June 30, 1991?

If you were certified as a professional counselor on or before June 30, 1991:

- Your license will be **converted to a Limited Practice Professional Counselor (LPPC)** license
- The Board will **automatically reissue** your license under this new designation

No additional action is required for this conversion.

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#### 15. What happens if I am currently licensed as an LPC (without MHSP) as of June 30, 2026?

If you hold an LPC license as of June 30, 2026:

- Your license will be **converted to a Limited Practice Professional Counselor (LPPC)** license
- The Board will **automatically reissue** your license under this updated title

This change reflects your current scope of practice and does not add new restrictions—it clarifies them.

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#### 16. What happens if I am currently licensed as an LPC/MHSP as of June 30, 2026?

If you hold an LPC/MHSP license as of June 30, 2026:

- Your license will be **converted to a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)** license
- The Board will **automatically reissue** your license under this title

Your **scope of practice remains the same**, including your ability to diagnose and treat mental health disorders. The only change is the removal of the MHSP designation from the title.

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#### 17. Will I need to apply or pay for this license conversion?

No. The Board will **automatically reissue** licenses based on your current designation. Additional details about timing and any administrative processes will be shared as implementation moves forward.

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## 18. Will my scope of practice change because of this conversion?

No. The conversion is designed to **align titles with existing scopes of practice**, not to change what you are authorized to do.

- LPC/MHSP → LPC (same clinical scope)
  - LPC → LPPC (same limited scope)
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## 19. Why is the Board automatically converting licenses?

Automatic conversion ensures:

- **Consistency across the profession**
- **Clear alignment between title and scope of practice**
- **No disruption to current license holders or workforce capacity**

This approach minimizes administrative burden while implementing a clearer, more nationally aligned licensure structure.

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## 20. Will this title change impact my renewal date for my license?

No, you will remain on the same licensure renewal cycle that you are currently on.

- Your new license will reflect your same renewal date.
  - No action on your part will be necessary.
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## 21. Where can I get more information or updates?

TLPCA will continue to share updates as they become available. Members are encouraged to monitor communications and reach out with questions as we move through the legislative and implementation process.

