

An Update on the NAADAC, IC&RC Discussions

By Patricia M. Greer, NAADAC President

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the NAADAC and IC&RC discussions.

In the spring of 2005, NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, the NAADAC National Certification Commission (NCC), the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) and the Society of Credentialed Addiction Professionals (S.CAP) announced a proposal to unify their credentials for addiction counselors. The discussions centered on creating a series of credentials that would be available at the local, national and international level.

Instrumental to this process was Dr. H. Westley Clark, Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and Dr. Karl White, CSAT's Team Leader for Workforce Development.

The NAADAC and IC&RC committees, made up of equal numbers of NAADAC and IC&RC representatives, decided on six essential components for any addiction credential:

1. The need for strong local credentialing boards;
2. Local, national and international credentialing for the profession;
3. Valid and legally defensible examinations;
4. The purpose, foundation and scope of practice for each credential;
5. Portability of credentials from state to state; and
6. Appropriate levels of credentialing based on the needs of local and international credentialing boards.

A proposal was presented to the IC&RC and NAADAC Boards of Directors suggesting a new addictions treatment and prevention credentialing board be established that would incorporate the current credentials of IC&RC and NAADAC. The new organization and its credentials were intended to be local, national and international in scope.

In June 2005, the initial discussions on credentials led to plans to create a "unification through merger" of our organizations. A 15 member workgroup unanimously voted to approve and recommend a unified governance structure to memberships of NAADAC and IC&RC. Another unanimous motion approved the unification of the two organizations' credentials.

In a statement released at the time, NAADAC President Mary R. Woods, RNC, LADC, MSHS and Acting IC&RC President Jeff Wilbee said, "Our discussions have been frank and transparent and we have been thoughtful in planning the details to move this to fruition. The next step in moving our associations and the addiction profession forward, is the careful consideration of a plan that will create the most benefit to our members and credential-holders."

The discussions centered on three key areas: credentialing, organization and training/advocacy. All participants also began development of an interim business plan for the amalgamated organization. The participants, made up of equal numbers of NAADAC and IC&RC representatives, decided on eight essential components for the interim business plan leading to a merger:

1. Having one recognized set of credentials worldwide.
2. Having a unified professional membership organization.
3. Having a single foundation for raising money for research, training and special projects.
4. Communicating the progress and the methods of the merger process to the associations' members.
5. Completing the due diligence process.
6. Developing a working budget for the new organization.
7. Ensuring the merger process is reviewed and approved by a legal counsel.
8. Creating funding streams to ensure the completion of the merger is not a financial drain on the associations.

Discussion at that time suggested that all current IC&RC and NCC credentialed professionals would have their qualifications unified by December 31st, 2005.

However, after meeting in July 2005, the discussions between the two organizations slowed and were disbanded in January 2006.

In an effort to assess the stumbling blocks in the negotiations, two representatives, Jeffrey A. Hoffman, PhD, of Danya International, Inc. and Vic Shaw, MTh, of Distance Learning Center, LLC, stepped forward to facilitate interviews of key stakeholders in both organizations.

Dr. Hoffman and Mr. Shaw conducted a series of interviews to discuss issues, barriers and opportunities for increased collaboration or possible merger between the two organizations.

A report on the Hoffman/Shaw findings was issued at the end of 2006 and has been circulated to NAADAC and IC&RC leaders. It should be noted that when the report was undertaken last year, both NAADAC and IC&RC agreed that it would only be released with the consent of both organizations' representatives.

While I am not able to disclose the contents of the report, I can assure you that NAADAC is committed to its discussions with IC&RC and is hopeful that they will reach a positive resolution.

NAADAC's ultimate goal is to ensure that all addiction focused professionals are served by

any move to establish new guidelines or criteria in the addiction profession. Our goals can be summarized as a desire:

1. To establish a truly national set of guidelines that establish best practices for addiction focused professionals.
2. To establish a clear career ladder that serves those in the addiction profession by laying out a clear employment path for those currently working or interested in a career in addiction services.
3. To have a set of transparent and effective credentials that are recognized and portable throughout the nation.
4. To assist in the development of national academic educational standards for addictions focused professionals.

These issues may not be easily resolved, but they are key in ensuring that addiction focused professionals have the opportunity to prosper and thrive in their chosen career path. These goals are keys to ensuring that the addiction profession is strengthened and sustainable for the future.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact me at pmgreer@sbcglobal.net or Cynthia Moreno Tuohy at cmoreno@naadac.org

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