We are seeing an increase of alcohol abuse on college and university campuses. Do any of you have satellite offices on or near these higher places of learning? This can also be a form of peer counseling.

A: Most colleges and universities do have a counseling program available on campus or close by with credentialed addiction professionals as counselors and prevention specialists. The campus counseling programs also provide education and presentations about alcohol abuse to classes, fraternities, sororities, and residence halls. They also bring activities to campus about alcohol/drug awareness days as well as recovery month activities. Resident hall directors are trained to provide peer counseling and make referrals when necessary. — Diane Sevening

As a masters level licensed addiction counselor, it has proven difficult to enter mental health centers with an addiction treatment credential only. It appears many will only consider the addiction credential only when added to another licensure credential such as LPC, LMFT, and LCSW. What are your thoughts on the effect of this on recruitment of addiction professionals into mental health centers? (Given that substance use disorders are mental health disorders, of course.)

A: Unfortunately I don’t think your experience is unique. The LPC, LMFT, and LCSW credentials are pretty universally accepted for reimbursement by third party payers. They are also seen as all-inclusive as far as expertise across the mental health continuum, although many who hold those credentials will readily tell you their training did not cover substance use disorders to an extent they feel competent in those areas. Some facilities do hire masters level prepared individuals with a SUD credential without the additional licenses. As credentialing is a state level function, recognition of a SUD credential as a standalone credential may take legislative action. That doesn’t address your situation immediately though. Contact your state NAADAC affiliate to see what efforts are taking place where you are located to have your credential recognized for third party reimbursement and/or independent practice. We have a sample licensure bill on the NAADAC website if SUD professionals are not licensed in your state. — Sherri Layton

Does supervision in the work place need to be done by a licensed substance use counselor?

A: Most States require that supervision is done by a licensed substance use counselor, however this does vary by State and by jurisdiction. It is always wise to check the regulations for the answer to this and other supervision questions. — Christine Chasek
I thought that over 16M people were newly enrolled under the ACA, but Cyn's first slide said 2M - could someone clarify?
A: The Current 2016 enrollment numbers: The current enrollment numbers (as of February 2016) are roughly: 12.7 million in the marketplace, and very roughly 20 million total between the ACA between the Marketplace, Medicaid expansion, young adults staying on their parents plan, and other coverage provisions. Cynthia’s first slide meant to say 20 million but the 0 after the 2 was erroneously omitted. – Diane Sevening

It seems to me at least in Minnesota that treatment centers are all going MI/CD [mentally ill / chemically dependent] so that they can double dip in government money. What is my best path to take in my 3 remaining years of schooling: Human Services, Psychology, sociology? I mean in addition to addiction counseling.
A: The reality is most clients who struggle with addiction also struggle with a mental health issue at some level. Many facilities are looking for clinicians who can evaluate and treat both conditions. The best path that prepares you for this is to pair a mental health license or training with the addiction counseling. This does require more school however in the long run it may be worth it. – Christine Chasek

Supervision for Licensed Alcohol Drug Counseleors is very hard to find in Nebraska due to Medicaid requirements and the amount of time involved for the supervisor. Any suggestions for this problem?
A: I think many would agree that supervision is an issue in most States for Addiction Counseling. There are few providers who have the time to do supervision due to the shortage of providers and to the demands placed on them. Adding in the restrictions from funders makes it even more difficult as you mention in your question. It is very helpful to get involved in the professional associations in your State, such as the NAADAC chapters. This allows you to find and connect with other licensed providers and get recommendations for supervisors, ways to find supervisors and to advocate for changing the systems. I would also suggest looking for employment that offers supervision as a benefit of employment. – Christine Chasek

The first two presenters were from largely rural states. What programs are being offered for recruitment in urban environments?
A: Although Diane and Tina are from South Dakota and Nebraska, respectively, their universities are located in the larger cities in their states. All of what they shared about recruitment at the college and university levels can be duplicated in urban areas. Actually they are probably ahead of what is happening in most universities in large cities. Establishing a Student Chapter of NAADAC at a university can be a great recruitment tool. Information to assist with that can be found on NAADAC’s website and Diane is a great resource as well. Her e-mail address is Diane.Sevening@usd.edu. In large cities many high schools have Health Occupations Club chapters. This can be an opportunity for recruitment as young people who are interested in psychology or social work professions may not know what is available for working with those with substance use disorders. Texas, within its NAADAC affiliate TAAP, has established a Young Addiction Professionals group. This group is to support and encourage students and those new to the field, age 18 – 35. As that group grows and strengthens they will become a recruitment entity in and of themselves. It is also a place those senior in the profession can contribute through mentoring. Please contact Sherri Layton at slayton@lahacienda.com if you’d like more info on this group. – Sherri Layton
Are there challenges unique to addiction counseling that you find when recruiting on college campuses?

A: One of the unique challenges to recruiting on college campuses for addiction counseling is facing and addressing the stigma that comes with this type of work and to misconceptions that are attributed to the profession. Many do not see addiction counseling as a viable career option thinking that it is necessary to be in recovery to be an addiction counselor. There is also the perception that addiction counselors are not well trained. Education is certainly the way to address these misperceptions when recruiting. – Christine Chasek

Since we have passed the Affordable Care Act and parity legislation, what needs to happen next in public policy?

A: Although both of these pieces of legislation were great advances there is still much work to be done. Congress passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) this year but it lacked adequate funding. We need to continue to advocate for funding to make all the components of CARA a reality. This is something you can contact your US Representative and Senators about and let them know of the addiction problems in your state and how badly funded is needed. They need to hear how this is impacting their home states. You can get the contact info through the Advocacy page on the NAADAC website.

We also need to insist on enforcement across all states with the parity legislation, the Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Equity Act, that was passed in 2008. Unfortunately, even 8 years later, we don’t have full compliance. Enforcement happens at the state level so you can contact your state insurance regulatory entity and ask what the process is to make a complaint if an insurance policy is not compliant with the parity provisions. In many cases that is not a user friendly process. Be prepared to help your clients make those complaints. We need to be the squeaky wheel in order to get attention drawn to those insurance providers that are not compliant with the parity law. – Sherri Layton