

Moving Forward As One – You Can Become Nationally Certified

By Kathryn Benson, LADC, NCAC II, QCS, NCC AP Chairperson

Perhaps it's the fact that presently I'm focused on the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP)'s launching of its next step toward our greater commitment for all to hold a single national credential that my energetic thoughts and excitement have clients and colleagues alike inquiring about addiction credentialing standards and process. Perhaps it's the fact that more and more we're seeing media coverage of the importance for medical professionals and treatment service agencies to demonstrate their competence to do the work they are entrusted to do. Whatever the catalyst, now is the time to get your national credential!



Recognized globally since 1991 as a professional vanguard, NCC AP has been issuing national credentials that are highly valued by

employers, clients and other stakeholders who rely upon them to convey excellence in the addiction profession. NCC AP national credentials carry a distinct meaning in the Substance Use Disorders (SUD) profession and are a promise of determination, proficiency and skill.

We all fully understand the benefit to all parties to have and work from a national standard of professional competence, skill and practice. We all fully understand and appreciate how imperative it is that we have SUD standards of care that are essential to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public. We all fully understand the legal benefit to measure and enforce competent care, to insure professionals have met the requirements to hold the credential as a qualified SUD professional. We all fully understand the recognized scope of practice that a national credential identifies, supports, and reinforces with continuing education requirements. We all fully understand the need to establish and promote a consistent standard of practice which is enforceable by a professional code of ethics and a disciplinary action process against non-compliant practitioners who put the public at risk. We all fully understand the value to the public, seeking assistance to select the most appropriate SUD professional for their needs and enhancing the benefit of open access to the treatment process. And...perhaps, we also all fully understand the precarious position in which our SUD profession finds itself, within the behavioral and health care industry — a position being undermined by the falsely promoted belief that addiction service does not have to be performed by helping professionals that are trained specifically in addiction treatment and recovery and who evidence competencies of knowledge, clinical skills and attitudes necessary to successfully treat someone with substance use disorders.

Mastering our specialty is a key differentiator of top professionals and obtaining an NCC AP national credential is the best way to get each of

us where we need to be in our role as a skilled, compassionate SUD healthcare provider.

The fact is we are better equipped to care for those who seek our assistance with confidence and assurance through our determination to:

- Master our specialty with invaluable knowledge and skill;
- Learn and share innovative, leading-edge practices of best care;
- Boost our confidence and stand out in our area of expertise;
- Expand our credibility with clients, employers, and colleagues;
- Expand our professional network; and
- Advance our career opportunities.

Professionals who have the drive and tenacity to strive for new heights in our profession are becoming an essential element for personal and organizational success while also bringing recognition and strength on a much broader level to our credentialed members.

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In this time of unprecedented healthcare change, SUD treatment providers face new challenges and opportunities. By taking on new, expanded roles, counseling professionals are helping providers achieve new levels of efficiency, patient satisfaction and quality of care. This growing importance, combined with a growing demand for competent SUD professionals, makes the need for a single national standard more critical and urgent than ever. Credentialing through a national credentialing organization is the only way to ensure all have the standardized skill sets and level of competence needed to care for those who put their lives and futures in our care.

NCC AP understands that increasingly MCOs, government-funded grants, and the Department of Transportation (DOT) all seek professionals who hold a national credential. Therefore, we encourage you to position yourselves for the greatest possible career opportunity.



New Test Exemption Opportunity for NCAC I & II Credentials

NCCAP is announcing an open window of test exempt opportunity for all currently state credentialed addiction professionals to receive, based on their already demonstrated competence, skill, training and experience, either the National Certified Addiction Counselor I (NCAC I) or the National Certified Addiction Counselor II (NCAC II) credential.

This **one time only** test exemption offer for a NCAC I or NCAC II national credential will be available for a six (6) month **period beginning November 1, 2015 and ending April 30, 2016. No test exemption applications will be accepted after the close of this offer. Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2016.**

SUD professionals may access the application on the NAADAC website at www.naadac.org/NCACtestexemptionoffer. NCC AP's continued purpose of credentialing is to standardize quality of addiction prevention, intervention, treatment and continuing care services. Our goals remain consistent in our efforts to focus on the individual counseling professional;

maintain standards that frequently exceed state requirements; encourage continued educational enhancement; bring forth most current research and therapeutic tools consistent with best practices and to provide assistance to employers, health care providers, educators, government entities, labor unions, other practitioners and the public in the identification of quality SUD counseling professionals.

NAADAC and the NCC AP wish to extend our support and encouragement to all of you who wish to enhance your professional standing and future opportunities by joining us in this time-limited invitation.

Wishing for you a gentle journey to national certification!



Kathryn Benson, NCAC II, LADC, QSAP, QSC, serves as Chair of the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCCAP), and has worked in the counseling profession since 1972, specializing in addiction issues since 1978. She may be contacted at lightbeing@aol.com with your thoughts or questions.

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