

NCC AP Chair Goodbye & Hello

By Kathryn Benson, LADAC II, NCAC II, QCS, NCC AP Consultant & Jerry Jenkins, MEd, MAC, NCC AP Chair



KATHY: To say that the journey as NCC AP Commissioner and then two terms as NCC AP Chairperson has been exciting, growth-producing, and totally rewarding would be an understatement. It has provided

me opportunities to learn, grow both professionally and personally, and to stretch my comfort zone to dimensions that I never previously considered. I have grown in my travels around this amazing planet of ours while meeting and working with wonderfully talented and dedicated professionals from a multitude of cultural experiences. Experience has shown that this representation of NCC AP, its mission and standards of professional development, has had both favorable and significant impact on the SUD treatment community and their ultimate benefit to patient care.

I am honored to have been elected to lead this amazing group of dedicated professionals as they have donated their time and energy to insure the NCC AP credentialing process is and will continue to be ethical, professional, fully reflective of established professional competencies, fair, and inclusive for all who seek national and international credentialing.

It is imperative in this moment to shine the spotlight on all the many people I have been privileged to work with, and greatly supported by during my tenure as NCC AP Chairperson. These amazing professionals include, but are by no means limited to: NCC AP Commissioners Thad Labhart, Steve Durkee, Rose Maire, Loretta Tillery, Art Romero, Kansas Cafferty, Tay Bian How, Sandra Street and Retired Certification Director Shirley Beckett Mikell. As NCC AP Chair, I worked closely with the NAADAC Executive Committee as we supported each other's mission of leadership within the SUD profession. I want to thank all the current and former EC members for their support, guidance, and encouragement with a special appreciation for former NAADAC Presidents Bob Richards and Kirk Bowden, and current NAADAC President Gerry Schmidt for their ability



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JERRY: Greeting to all from Alaska! I am very honored to again be part of the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP). My sincere thanks to my predecessor and

former Tennessee colleague Kathryn Benson and NAADAC Executive Director Cynthia Moreno Tuohy for helping my transition back onto the Commission.

My previous tenure, from 1993 to 1999, was very rewarding as the Commission matured the National Certified Addiction Counselor (NCAC) Levels I and II credentials and implemented the Master Addiction Counselor (MAC) credential. These credentials provided an instant recognition for addiction professionals who pursued a NCAC I, NCAC II, or MAC to demonstrate knowledge of their profession by meeting a national standard. The standard was developed by incorporating the best practices and critical knowledge areas into a process requiring documented training, experience and demonstrated knowledge. The latter was determined by taking and passing examinations prepared, reviewed and validated by knowledgeable addiction professionals in the field. In other words, we addiction treatment professionals had competency based credentials!

As I rejoin the Commission, I am excited about its work developing specialized credentials and endorsements that provide professionals with formal recognition of their specialized competencies and skills. The current specialized credentials are: Nicotine Dependence Specialist (NDS); National Certified Adolescent Addiction Counselor (NCAAC); National Endorsed Student Assistance Professional (NESAP); National Clinical Supervision Endorsement (NCSE); National Endorsed Co-Occurring Disorders Professional (NECODP); and National Peer Recovery Support Specialist (NCPRSS). As the leader of a company that does recovery-oriented span of life behavioral health services, I fully grasp why these

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to hear me and their on-going generosity of support and wisdom. Finally, the never-ending work and support by all the NAADAC staff requires a huge special THANK YOU! to Donna Croy, Certification Manager, Yao Kouassi, Certification Coordinator, Greg Potestio, Programs and Technology Manager, HeidiAnne Werner, Director of Operations and Finance, Jessica Gleason, Director of Communications, and of course our ever-supportive mentor and leader Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, Executive Director. Thank you each and everyone. You may never realize the powerful impact you have had on me and my ever-evolving spirit.

During our recent years NCC AP has:

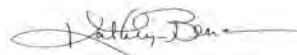
- created a new credential for Peer Recovery Support Specialists;
- created a new credential for Clinical Supervisors;
- contracted with and transitioned to Kryterion, our new testing company which now allows for testing on demand and at the national conference, and provides immediate test results for most test takers (with agreement by their credentialing state authority);
- engaged in expansion of the use of our testing products by the states of North Dakota, Virginia, Wyoming and Maryland;
- successfully completed a comprehensive grandfathering process of credentialing for the NCAC I, NCAC II, MAC credentials, during which approximately 5,500 professionals were issued their national credentials as addiction professionals;
- engaged in on-going collaborative work with Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence (ATTUD) and Council for Tobacco Treatment Training Programs (CTTTP) to more fully serve those professionals addressing nicotine use disorders;
- engaged in the development of the new NAADAC/NCC AP Code of Ethics, expanding the code to clearly encompass the breath of the ethical guidelines that affect our profession today;
- engaged in on-going collaborative work with National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) to more fully serve those professionals addressing gambling/gaming disorders;
- engaged in on-going collaborative work with the National Association for Drug/Recovery Court Professionals to assist in the identification of needed SUD training, development of Recovery/Drug Court code of ethics and professional standards and subsequent professional credentialing;
- and last, but not least, fully engaged with representatives from many countries and U.S. Territories including, but not limited to: Hong Kong, Iceland, Kenya, Micronesia, Pacific Jurisdiction, Puerto Rico, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and the International Centre For Certification And Education Of Addiction Professionals (ICCE) in our effort to assist in the continuing development of professional training, credentialing expansion and inclusion of best practices in the delivery of substance use disorder continuum of care in prevention, intervention and treatment services.

The role of professional credentialing in the substance use disorder treatment profession today is essential to the continued role and impact of evidence-based care. Recognizing, implementing, and maintaining professional competencies and current codes of ethical principles and standards of conduct provide an overriding assurance to individuals seeking service that their care will be provided by specially trained professionals. A guarantee that ongoing efforts are in place to insure professionals practice with consistency and standardization of care is paramount to the overall welfare and safety of the public. That is NCC AP's commitment to the individual/families seeking assistance. The professional seeking training, support,

and continued knowledge and skill development, the SUD profession as it changes and modifies itself to embrace new research-based treatment modalities, and the general public seeking guidance and care will always be forefront in our commitment to service as the leader in our profession.

It is now with gratitude and excitement that I transition out of my role as NCC AP Chair and into my new role as NCC AP/NAADAC Consultant and welcome into the role of NCC AP Chair Jerry Jenkins, MEd, MAC, a long-time NAADAC/NCC AP involved and highly respected colleague from the great state of Alaska.

Welcome Jerry!



Kathryn Benson, NCAC II, LADC, QSAP, QSC, served as Chair of the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP), 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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credentials are valuable.

Who is the best professional to refer someone to that smokes a couple packs a day? Who is best to work in the school based behavioral health program addressing substance use and emotional disturbance? Who has skills to deal with an adult with both a serious mental illness and serious substance use disorder? Who should be supervising addiction counselors? What about the person in long term recovery from a substance use disorder who now wants to use her/his lived experience to help others and wants to demonstrate a professional competency? One way to find such professionals is to look for credentials signifying that specific specialization.

Why is this important? Providers need to be helping people recover and become as healthy as possible. This will in turn increase the value of the services provided. Now, as health care is being transformed by analytics and new payment schemes like value based care, it is more important than ever to identify professionals with specialized behavioral health skill sets.

Former NAADAC President Kirk Bowden said it best when he wrote "addiction counseling is a specific profession within the field of behavioral health. To be effective addiction counselors requires a specific, specialized, knowledge base."¹ NCC AP's credentials are the most effective way to demonstrate having that "specific, specialized, knowledge base."

I look forward to helping advance the profession and professionals through the NCC AP.



REFERENCE

¹Bowden, Kirk (2015). My Big Concern for the Addiction Counseling Profession. *Advances in Addiction & Recovery*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p 4.

Jerry A. Jenkins, MEd, MAC, has been the Chief Executive Officer of Anchorage since 2003 adding Fairbanks Community Mental Health Services in 2013. He is in his third year as the President of the Alaska Behavioral Health Association. Anchorage/Fairbanks Community Mental Health Services provides behavioral health services across the span of life from ages 2 to 100. As an addiction treatment professional, Jenkins has over 34 years of experience in treating substance use disorders and mental illness. He has worked in and managed community based, outpatient, halfway and residential treatment services. He is an advocate for safe, affordable and accommodating housing for consumers as well as recovery as the expectation for behavioral health care with particular emphasis on being trauma informed.