

Help choose the future leaders of NAADAC! It's election time again, and we are seeking new leadership to help us determine the direction of the Association. NAADAC holds elections every two years to select its Officers and four Regional Vice-Presidents (the other four Regional Vice-Presidents are selected on alternate years). This year, nine well-qualified addiction-focused professionals have been nominated as candidates for NAADAC Executive Leadership. All 2018–2020 terms will begin on October 11, 2018, immediately following the 2018 NAADAC Annual Conference in Houston, TX.

This spring, NAADAC received two nominations for President-Elect and two nominations for Secretary. Please find each candidate's statements below in order to inform your vote.

NAADAC only received one nomination each for the positions of Treasurer and Mid-Atlantic, Mid-South, Northeast and Northwest Regional Vice-Presidents. Therefore, these five nominees will be seated in their nominated roles for the 2018–2020 term without an election. The winning candidates' statements are listed below for your review. Congratulations to our five winners!

Voting starts on May 1, 2018 and ends May 31, 2018. All NAADAC members are eligible and encouraged to vote. Instructions for voting will be emailed to members and can be found at [www.naadac.org/2018-leadership-elections](http://www.naadac.org/2018-leadership-elections). Members may vote online by logging into their [naadac.org](http://naadac.org) account or by mail. To request a paper ballot to vote by mail, please email HeidiAnne Werner at [hwerner@naadac.org](mailto:hwerner@naadac.org).

Please read the following statements by and for the candidates in order to help inform your vote this spring.

## Meet the 2018 Candidates for NAADAC Executive Leadership Positions

By Kristin Hamilton, JD, NAADAC Communications Manager

# ELECT

# 2018



**PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATE:**

Mita M. Johnson, EdD, NCC, LPC, LMFT, ACS, LAC, MAC, SAP  
 Evergreen, CO  
 mitamjohnson@gmail.com

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** It has been a pleasure to serve NAADAC through various

activities. I have had the privilege of being: a General Board member representing the Colorado State Affiliate CAAP, Regional Vice-President for the Southwest Region, member of NAADAC's Executive Committee, and current Treasurer. I am the current Ethics Chair for NAADAC. It was an honor to go to Hong Kong with Gerry Schmidt several years ago, to provide NAADAC trainings related to NCC AP testing. There have been several opportunities to provide webinars for NAADAC related to HIV and other infectious diseases that our clients are exposed to while struggling with a substance use disorder. NAADAC's annual conferences have been an opportunity for me to share current data and information related to drug trends, ethics, and clinical supervision as well as provide a SAP training Day 1. In 2017, I had the opportunity to work on rewriting NAADAC's *Basics of Addiction Counseling Desk Reference on Module I: Pharmacology of Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders* and *Module III: Ethical and Professional Issues in Addiction Counseling*. I helped with test questions. I have participated on the Clinical Issues Committee, Ethics Committee (Chair), Finance and Audit Committee (Chair), National Education and Research Foundation (NERF) Committee, and Personnel Committee.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:**

More than 21 million Americans age 12 and older struggle with a substance use disorder (SUD). Many of these individuals have other co-occurring behavioral health disorders. Nationally we are experiencing an unprecedented workforce crisis. Many states have 66% of the workforce they need to help persons and families struggling with SUDs. The human, social and economic costs of not treating SUDs are undeniable. Lack of qualified workers (recruitment concerns), inadequate compensation (retention concerns), insufficient professional development, and ongoing stigma/discrimination challenge the health of our profession. NAADAC's mission is to unify, lead and empower addiction-focused professionals and the behavioral health profession. NAADAC is strategically positioned to understand our unique concerns and needs. NAADAC advocates for the delivery of the best, current science-based services. NAADAC is actively working with major insurance payers to recognize NCC AP national credentials and address compensation issues. NAADAC is purposefully involved in state/national government policy development, advocating on behalf of all providers along the entire continuum of care. NAADAC spearheads discussions and perceptions related to stigma. NAADAC is uniquely and tactically positioned to be the voice for the addiction profession and providers. I truly believe that NAADAC is committed through personnel and resources to promote and guard our profession.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** I have had the privilege of being a clinician, clinical supervisor, trainer, and educator for many years; I still maintain a clinical practice. I am of the strong opinion that our clients deserve the best services available, in stigma-free, bias-free environments. When we encounter stigma and discrimination we have an obligation to use our voices to address the situation, advocating for SUD clients and their families. I also have a passion for workforce development, including recruitment and retention. Recruitment needs to begin early

*Johnson, continued on page 17* ◀



**PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATE:**

Thurston S. Smith, MPA, CCS, NCAC I, CADC  
 Arlington, TN  
 teesmith1@hotmail.com

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:**

Thurston has served faithfully on both the NAADAC executive committee and state affiliate levels for over 15 years. More specifically, the nominee has served 2-terms as Southeast Regional Vice President, 1-term as National Membership Chair, 2 terms as NAADAC Secretary, and 1-term as SCAADAC Regional Representative. Additional service activities include appointments to the following NAADAC and state affiliate committees: Peer Assistance Committee; International Committee; Veterans and Military Sub-Committee; Personnel Committee; and Credentialing Committees. Additionally, Thurston has passionately represented the interests of NAADAC, in both official and unofficial capacities, within the domestic and international healthcare arenas, while articulating the organization's mission in an effective and meaningful way.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:**

As the premier global organization for addiction-focused professionals, NAADAC must remain a visible, vocal, and viable force within the healthcare industry. With an emphasis on advocacy, parity, credentialing, and public education, NAADAC must ensure its members are both well trained and well positioned to address the growing needs of individuals and families impacted by addiction. While these ideals underscore the organization's pledge to its members and other stakeholders, NAADAC should forever maintain a proactive stance within the public sphere. These goals should thoughtfully include a rigorous public policy program that candidly speaks to the skills and competencies of addiction professionals before Congress, while highlighting their indispensable contributions to the field. To these ends, the attainment of 100% parity for addictions treatment, including the professional licensure of addictions treatment providers should never be abandoned. As each precept effectively captures the organization's "Four Pillars" and "key priorities", the future of NAADAC will always be found within the constructs of a thriving member-driven workforce.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** As an Executive Career Field (ECF) employee within the U.S. Government, Thurston S. Smith currently serves as the Congressional Liaison for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in Memphis, Tennessee and has received a number of other public service appointments on the municipal, county, and state levels. A few of these include: 3 Mayoral appointments to the Shelby County Juvenile Justice Consortium (CJJC), 1 state appointment to the Tennessee Community Resource Board for the Department of Corrections; 1 gubernatorial appointment to the Charleston/Dorchester Mental Health Board; 1 gubernatorial appointment to the Charleston County Foster Care Review Board; and 1 State of South Carolina appointment as Liaison to Morehouse School of Medicine Addiction Technology Transfer Center (SEATTC). Thurston has been honored for his outstanding public service on two separate occasions through Proclamation by the Tennessee House of Representatives. Thurston has been awarded the designation of Senior Fellow by the American Leadership Forum (ALF)/Leadership Memphis, and is a graduate of Leadership Beaufort and the Veterans Health Administration VISN-7 Leadership Program. Having worked in the addictions and mental health treatment field for over 25 years, Thurston has earned the reputation as sought after trainer within

*Smith, continued on page 17* ▶

## CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY



### **Candidate for Secretary:**

Susan Coyer, MA, AADC-S, MAC, CCJP  
Huntington, WV  
susancoyer@outlook.com

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** I have had the privilege of being involved in NAADAC and the West Virginia affiliate for 25 years. For the last 4 years,

I have been honored to serve as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President. Prior to that, I was on the NCC AP for six years and chaired the ethics committee. I have also served on the NAADAC Membership, Conference, Bylaws, and Public Policy Committees. I am a past president of the West Virginia affiliate (WVAADC) and a delegate to the NAADAC Board of Directors for 4 years. With WVAADC, I also held the positions of secretary and conference, membership, awards, nominations and bylaws committees.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** NAADAC's membership and advocacy efforts are vital to support and grow our workforce. Workforce development and strong advocacy efforts are essential in ensuring the quality of prevention, treatment and recovery support services as well as improving treatment for individuals across the nation. Advancing legislation at both local and national levels is imperative to continue to support and enhance our profession. Established partnerships and new ventures allow NAADAC to have a meaningful impact on legislation and lead our membership into new horizons. NAADAC remains the voice of addiction professionals and the leader in advancing addiction recovery. I see our organization growing and continuing as the leader in the growth and strengthening of our profession. Expanding our partnerships with other organizations relevant to NAADAC's mission as well with our representatives in our States on Capitol Hill will allow us to continue the exceptional work that makes NAADAC the leader in our field.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** I have a master's degree in counseling with an emphasis in addiction counseling. I have held a number of clinical and management positions in outpatient, intensive outpatient, residential, community housing and medication assisted treatment programs. My credentials include Master Addiction Counselor (MAC), Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC), Certified Clinical Supervisor (CCS) and Certified Criminal Justice Professional

(CCJP). I am currently a Regional Director with Acadia Healthcare in the Comprehensive Treatment Centers Division specializing in the treatment of opioid addiction. I have facilitated numerous workshops and training in Motivational Interviewing, Motivational Interviewing Assessment: Supervisory Tools to Enhance Proficiency (MIA:STEP), clinical supervision, Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiatives (SVORI) and ethics for addiction and prevention professionals. I have participated in numerous legislative activities at the State and National level.



### **Candidate for Secretary:**

Christopher Taylor, DBA, CASAC, LMHC, MAC  
Avon, NY  
candwtaylor@yahoo.com

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** I have been involved in NAADAC since the late 1990's, first as a Board Member of the New York Affiliate, NYFAC,

then as a Board Member and eventually the President of the Association of Addiction Professionals of New York (AAPNY). I have served in a variety of capacities on behalf of AAPNY and NAADAC, including representation on the State Clinical Advisory Panel and, more recently, as a member of the Per Advocate Advisory Board of the The New York Certification Association (NYCA).

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** I believe that the future of NAADAC is brighter than ever. NAADAC is uniquely positioned to help shape the future of care that is provided to those who suffer from substance use disorders. Whether through strategic partnerships, National and International representation and collaboration, advocacy, continuing education, access to professional liability insurance, or professional certifications, our NAADAC is the preeminent "one stop shop" for addiction professionals. Coming from a state that is not a "NAADAC State", I see the tremendous value that NAADAC offers and share this with others as often as I can.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** I have served in the capacity of Secretary for AAPNY in the past. I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to do so for NAADAC.

## CANDIDATE FOR TREASURER



### **Candidate for Treasurer:**

Gregory J. Bennett, LAT, MAC  
Powell, WY  
180degreedifference@gmail.com

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** Executive Committee Member acting as: Northwest Regional Vice President 2011-2016. Wyoming Association

for Addiction Professionals President 2006-2010. Wyoming Association for Addiction Professionals Past President 2010-2012. NAADAC Committees: PAC, Student Advisory and conference Committees. Attendance to all Executive Committee Conference meetings. Attendance to every NAADAC Conference from 2009 to present. NAADAC Board of Directors 2006-2016

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** I see the behavioral health workforce growing exponentially in the coming

years. NAADAC plays a vital role in many areas: Clinical, Professional, Certification, Political, Educational, Treatment Access, Third Party Payers, Organizational Development, Leadership and Governmental Relationships. I see NAADAC as being the Organization that, "Speaks for those who believe they have no voice." NAADAC is a vital piece to the ever changing Behavioral Health System. NAADAC's future is to cultivate a plethora of relationships with a variety of Stakeholders as a means to be the Leading Organization for Addiction Professionals striving to survive an ever changing Behavioral Health space.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** Gregory has many years of dedicated service on the NAADAC Board of Directors and Executive Committee Board. Gregory is highly ambitious, knowledgeable, passionate and dauntless in his endeavors.

# CANDIDATES FOR REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

## MID-ATLANTIC



**Candidate for Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President:**

Ron Pritchard, CSAC, CAS, NCAC II  
Virginia Beach, VA  
ronpritchard@verizon.net

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** While serving in the US Navy I served as a Drug Alcohol Program Advisor, SA Counselor, and a Counseling and Assistance Center Director. I was first certified as a Virginia Addiction Counselor in 1986 and I have been a NAADAC Member since 1992. I have served three times as the Affiliate President of Virginia. I completed an unserved

*Pritchard, continued on page 16*

## MID-SOUTH



**Candidate for Mid-South Regional Vice President:**

Matthew Feehery, LCDC  
Houston, TX  
mattfeebery@comcast.net

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** Matt is currently serving as Mid-South RVP and is helping to organize the 2018 NAADAC Conference. He has previously served as President of the Texas Affiliate, TAAP, and is TAAP's current Finance Committee Chair. Matt has been a member of TAAP and NAADAC since 1982. As Mid-South RVP he has worked with the non-active states to develop a stronger presence for NAADAC

*Feehery, continued on page 16*

## NORTHEAST



**Candidate for Northeast Regional Vice President:**

William A. Keithcart, MA, LADC, MAC, SAP  
Essex Junction, VT  
william.keithcart@uvmhealth.org

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** I am currently completing my first term as the Northeast Regional Vice President for NAADAC. In this role, I implemented a monthly northeast affiliate conference call to provide support and guidance in how NAADAC can be of assistance to increase our influence in the northeast and on a national scale. On a monthly basis, I also

*Keithcart, continued on page 16*

## NORTHWEST



**Candidate for Northwest Regional Vice President:**

Malcolm Horn, LCSW, MAC, LAC, SAP, NCIP  
Billings, MT  
mhorn@rimrock.org

**Summarize the nominee's NAADAC activities:** Current RVP for Northwest Region (10/2016 through 10/2018); focus on building state affiliates for states without leadership or active board; previous state president for Montana (10/2015 through 10/2017); president elect for 2 years prior to that; presenter (2017 Annual Conference, 2017 and 2018 Webinar series).

*Horn, continued on page 17*



*Prichard, continued from page 15*

term as Mid Atlantic RVP. I am currently the NAADAC Mil/Vet Advisory Committee Chair. I have served on NERF, PAC, and now on the NMFP-AC Scholarship panel. I organize and provide membership recruitment events on military installations and college/university campuses. I am an advocate for increased recognition of certified addiction counselors and all addiction professionals within the behavioral healthcare community. In particular I advocate for increased recognition of certified addiction counselors and all addiction professionals within the behavioral healthcare community. In particular I advocate for standardization of civil service pay grades commensurate with scope of practice within the workforce. I have written and presented a number of White Papers/Point Papers on the pay grade parity topic to pertinent authorities in both HHS and DOD training and discussion forums. I have collaborated with several Mid-Atlantic institutions of higher learning to foster development of Student and Veteran Student campus chapters for those seeking a SUD treatment provider career path.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** I believe NAADAC will prevail as the single-most powerful advocate for the continued viability of well trained, well-paid and well-motivated addiction professionals who provide evidence-based and culturally appropriate SUD prevention, treatment and recovery to those in need. From a position of financial stability and with the technology to remain in the forefront in provision of education, training and information pertinent to the workforce, NAADAC will insure its membership is informed, trained and aware of developments affecting our profession. We must renew, develop and expand collaborative partnerships with organizations that share our common goals so we may speak with a unified voice regarding legislative issues pertinent to our membership and our clients. NAADAC must intensify advocacy with insurance providers and state SUD Treatment administrators to insure fair compensation for addiction professionals. NAADAC must initiate dialogue with OPM, TRICARE, DOD, VA and other entities regarding recognition and acceptance of standardized pay grades and scopes of practice within the DOD and VA organizations. I believe NAADAC must welcome Certified Peer Recovery Specialists/Coaches and ensure they are offered appropriate mentorship and supervision. NAADAC also must be vigilant for opportunities to offer our collective wisdom to any development adjunct services for the treatment of SUD.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** As a trainer, speaker and advocate for the profession and the field, I have developed and delivered a number of advocacy and educational presentations to promote current best practices in prevention, treatment and recovery of SUD. I worked eight years as the SUD outreach and treatment navigator for the medically indigent in Norfolk, Virginia. I also have extensive active duty and civil service experience with the military and have developed and presented several training sessions on military culture, policies, procedures, and techniques of SUD treatment, obstacles, and expected outcomes in the Military/Veteran and family community. I have appeared at local HHS, CSB, Foreign Legion, and American Legion and on SAMHSA webinars to discuss the topic of SUD from a Military/Veteran perspective. I serve on three Governor's Advisory Boards as the SUD advisor. I have provided editorial commentary and advice to Virginia's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Program. I was one of the developers of the Virginia Summer

Institute for Addiction Studies (VSIAS) which will again host one of the premiere SUD conferences — the seventeenth — in the Mid-Atlantic this year. I continue to serve on the VSIAS Faculty/Board.

*Feehery, continued from page 15*

and has planned a conference for counselors in Arkansas.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** NAADAC should continue to focus on advancing and protecting the addiction counseling profession, helping to strengthen the credential, and improve opportunities for reimbursement.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** Matt has served in executive leadership positions in addiction treatment for the past 35 years. He currently is CEO of a large treatment facility that employs over 300 people. He understands the needs of addiction professionals from both a counselor and administrator point of view.

*Keithcart, continued from page 15*

participate in the NAADAC executive committee conference calls. I look forward to continuing with my current responsibilities in my second and final term in this position.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** NAADAC is the voice of the addiction professional. As our profession continues to evolve, NAADAC serves a critical role in establishing the standards and credentials necessary to work in the field of addictions. Our discipline is currently going through a lot of changes. NAADAC can and should be leading the way for us to be recognized by other professional organizations for the quality of our work.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** I have had the pleasure of working in field of addictions for over eighteen years. My first five years was as a clinician at Phoenix House Mountain View Treatment Center, 90-day residential program, followed by three plus years at the Chittenden Clinic, a methadone program, and the past ten years at DayOne, an outpatient substance use disorder program. As Program Supervisor of DayOne at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, Vermont, the academic setting allows an opportunity to supervise graduate students and train colleagues and medical personnel on the latest advances of best practice in our field. I currently sit on the Board of Directors of VAPA, Vermont Addiction Professionals' Association and VAMHAR, Vermont Association of Mental Health and Addiction Recovery and Co-Chair the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance, Treatment Access and Recovery Support Action Team.



*Kristin Hamilton is the Communications Manager for NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. She works on NAADAC public relations, communications, and digital media, including the NAADAC website and social media, is editor of NAADAC's two ePublications, the bi-weekly Addiction & Recovery eNews and weekly Professional eUpdate, and is associate editor for NAADAC's magazine, Advances in Addiction and Recovery. She also contributes to the planning, organization, and administration of communication campaigns, administers the PhD Candidate Survey Program, and serves as the affiliate liaison for the Communications Department. Hamilton holds a*

*Juris Doctorate from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, MA and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and Chemistry from Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI.*

## CANDIDATES FOR REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS (continued)

*Horn, continued from page 15*

Using leadership and educational roles, I have promoted the field of SUD treatment with the end goal of improving client care through reducing stigma and changing policy. By engaging stakeholders and constituents, I believe I am poised to continue the work that I have begun.

**Philosophy statement of the nominee on the future of NAADAC:** Improve access to care by reducing stigma and legislative actions; address workforce shortage issues by promoting national credential/licensure and portability

NAADAC has the history and resources to truly change the face of SUD treatment on a micro and macro system; by pooling knowledge, skills and

connections NAADAC has the power to truly maximize impact and, thus, improve client care. No other organization is poised to do so and, as this is something I believe must happen in order to effectively care for our clients, I want to contribute to and be involved in the process.

**Other qualifications of the nominee for this office:** Malcolm has served as Rimrock's Director of Learning for the past five years. She advocates for client's rights and supports staff in personal and professional development. There is no one more suited to represent our region.

## CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT (continued)

*Johnson, continued from page 13*

and be ongoing, as a rewarding profession to pursue. Career ladders need to include educational and non-educational tracks. As a prominent health specialty, we need to define and defend what is within the addiction's scope of practice. Our workforce needs diversity of providers, to appropriately represent the diverse populations served. We need to promote peer recovery services. Compensation is a huge problem that is not easily addressed; efforts must be directed here if we are going to retain the providers we recruit. Given the current workforce crisis, my intentions at NAADAC are to support and promote our workforce. I would like the opportunity to serve you as President, working actively on your workforce concerns and needs.

*Smith, continued from page 13*

the profession and is modestly published. Most recently, Thurston was appointed to the Shelby County Opioid Task Force by the Chairman of the Shelby County Commission.

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