Addiction Counselor Licensure: A National Model in Development and Rationale for Legislation

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Why Addiction Licensure Now? *The Clock is Ticking*

- American Counseling Association (ACA) Vision 20/20 Project.

  **What is this?**

  - ACA is moving to have all remaining non-licensed states come under *Licensed Professional Counselor* (LPC) title by the year 2020.
  - Initial plans are to be licensed, you must graduate from a *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs* (CACREP) program.
  - Moving toward Integrated Behavioral Health Model to meet Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) standards.
Why Addiction Licensure Now?

- American Counseling Association (ACA) Vision 20/20.

What does this mean for the addictions profession?

- ACA will draw up licensure standards.
- LPC is general umbrella title, and Clinical Mental Health Counseling in nature.
- Addictions Counseling, School Counseling, will be specialties.
- Thus it will not be profession specific licensure.
- Must have graduate degree
Why Addiction Licensure Now?

- American Counseling Association (ACA) Vision 20/20. (Cont.)

What does this mean for the addictions profession?

- Addictions Counseling will lose professional identity.
- You will be under ACA Scopes of Practice.
- You will be under ACA Code of Ethics.
- Must be from a CACREP accredited program to take licensure exam, to be employable.
- Addictions counseling will fall under ACA direction.
What is NAADAC’s Plan?

• Implement training and education in remaining non licensed states with NAADAC state affiliates, beginning with this conference. These states will join with current addiction counseling licensed states.

• NAADAC state affiliate initiate the formation of their own legislative committee.

• Each state have a licensure bill that is Addictions Counseling specific ready for 2015 legislative session.
What has NAADAC Done?

- Began planning in 2007 with the following now in place.
  - Developed nationally standardized Addiction Counseling specific academic degree program content, at *undergraduate Associates* (AA, AS) through *graduate Doctoral* (PhD) level.
  - In 2010 the *National Addictions Studies Accreditation Commission* (NASAC) was created. (With assistance and endorsed by SAMHSA)
  - Created *national standardized addictions counseling licensure bill* for remaining states to use. Based upon Indiana Model with, Arizona and South Dakota.
What has NAADAC Done? (Cont.)

- Created a *National Addictions Counseling Scope of Practice* based on NASAC curriculum. (With assistance and endorsed by SAMHSA)

- *Licensure exam* based upon NASAC curriculum.

- Created the *Professional Affairs and Practice Standards* (PAPS) Committee. One function of PAPS, is to serve as a consultant to states on addiction licensure legislation.
The Reality

- Licensure will happen in all 50 states. You will be impacted.
- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT), National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has moved to license all 50 states in their profession and academic accreditation standards.
- “It is imperative to move now to control and keep control of our addictions counseling professional destiny, than have someone else do it for you”.
- Did I mention that licensure will happen in all 50 states?
How is certification different from licensure?

- Certification is meeting the criteria, set by a profession, in passing an exam that assess knowledge and understanding.
- Some criticisms of certification
  - May lack a standardized education process.
  - Assumes that years of experience (personal or professional) equals expertise.
  - No one has evaluated competency by application visually.
  - Mistaken assumption that certification is full competency, when in reality it is mastering material resulting in a passing exam score.
How is licensure different from certification?

- Licensure is meeting legislated standards of professional competency for independent practice.
- In essence what is licensure?
  - Title protection
  - Practice protection
  - Regulated profession
  - Possible non supervised practice
  - Subject to ethical review board with consequences
  - Meeting rigorous academic standards and evaluation

Licensure supersedes certification
Need to develop a legislative rationale.

- Why do we want licensure?
- What happens if we don’t?
- What happens if we do?
Need to develop a legislative rationale (cont.)

Other considerations
- Who will be affected by licensure?
- Who do we need to assist us with licensure?
- How do we go about licensure?
- What do we want in licensure?
- When do we start the licensure process?
Important considerations in developing licensure

- A legislative committee
- Chair of the legislative committee
- Lobbyist
- House sponsor
- Senate sponsor
- Time
- Cost
- Allies and Adversaries
Legislative committee

- Number of people needed
- Who will be on the committee?
- Who will chair the committee?
- Define duties and responsibilities of the committee and members
- Establish timelines
- Meetings (When, Where, How, How often and keep minutes)
Lobbyist

YES!

- Do we need one?
- What experience do they have?
- Do they have time to represent you?
- Do they understand your cause?
- What do they cost?/What can you afford?/ Get a contract!
- Can they help craft the bill?
- Can they follow the bill through the legislative process?
- Who will hire and be ultimately in charge of the lobbyist?
Licensure bill sponsors

- House sponsor & Senate Sponsor (Lobbyist recommendations ?)

- Should be one person from each party

- What is their awareness of addiction ?

- What is their awareness of the addiction profession?

- Do they understand the need for a licensure bill?
Allies and Adversaries (This is really important).

- Who are people and groups that will benefit, or not benefit from licensure?
- Who are people and groups that can support the bill?
- Identify allies and adversaries in other allied groups (e.g. Treatment facilities, Higher Education, Social Workers, Psychologists etc.)
- Find out why or why they cannot support the bill.
- Allies and adversaries within your own profession and membership. If adversaries (e.g. What are their concerns? Who will address them? How will they be addressed?)

You will not please everyone
The details of the bill

- What do you want in the bill? *Then be clear and spell it out!*

- **Education Components** (e.g. Degrees, Courses/Addiction courses, NASAC Accredited Programs, Practicum and Internship hours, NCCAP Exam, Existing certification, Post Graduate hours)

- **Tiers, Levels and Name of licensure** (e.g. Undergraduate/Licensed Addiction Counselor, Graduate/Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor)

- **Scope of Practice** (e.g. What can they do, and not do based upon degree, and course components? Use NASAC Scope of Practice.)

- **Exclusions** (e.g. Clergy, AA sponsors)
The details of the bill (cont.)

- **Grandfathering** - *What is grandfathering?* Allowing for individuals to be licensed at some tier or level, who are deficient in meeting one or all established minimum standards of the bill, let alone meet the standards once fully enacted. Examples:
  - Gf does not include taking the exam
  - Gf lasts for no more than one year
  - Gf may allow for non degree persons to be licensed with a minimum numbers of years of practice.
  - Gf may allow for other degreed and allied professionals with no addiction experience to be licensed.

*Grandfathering is the cost of doing business with adversaries to get the bill passed*
Some Wisdom

• Do your homework on finding support, facts, research, evidence and precedent for your cause.

• *Make your pig as fat as you can for the table.* If you need to negotiate you leave yourself some room. The opposing side will think they got you to budge, and your really haven't given anything up.

• Don’t be afraid of other groups. They may try to intimidate you into quitting. You may have to play “chess” and “poker”.

• Who is your spokes person for the bill?
Some Wisdom (cont.)

- What are your talking points?
- Practice your presentation till you don’t need notes
- Inform your membership early of your intentions
- Licensure may take some time, maybe years
- Get it right in writing, you only get one chance to say it right in the bill
- Talk to other states such as Indiana and Arizona
- What is non negotiable?
- Anticipate adversarial questions and have an answer
- You have to be tough and “all in”, this is not for wimps
Thank you and I wish you well!

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