



CT Association for Addiction Professionals

Raised Bill No. 1065 LCO No. 4107

To: Sen. Gerrantana and Rep. Johnson, Co-Chairs of the Public Health Committee

Date: 3/13

Submitted: John Forlenza-Bailey, LADC

Please restore the prior existing language for criteria of the Licensed Alcohol Drug Counselor by repealing Section 10 (pertaining to Alcohol and Drug Counselors) of PA-12-197SHB5514. It is the right thing to do.

I have been a substance abuse professional for over 30 years, and it is distressing to have our profession degraded by the current criteria to obtain licensure as a professional drug and alcohol counselor. How can someone without proper training regarding evidenced based theory and limited experience provide adequate rapport and skills to adolescents and adults in need of our counseling services? This recently new mandate is like going to Jiffy Lube to get a transmission done. It is just not adequate, and insurance companies will be hard pressed to reimburse a professional without understanding evidenced based theory and having adequate training hours accrued to which previous LADC have had historically. I am strongly urging you to support the enhanced educational (masters in behavioral health science) and knowledge and skill based training in alcohol & and drug abuse counseling.

Without proper training, supervision, and education regarding substance abuse issues that can only be obtained by learning the theory and practice from other substance abuse professionals; the untrained, unsupervised, and limited educated individuals will surely be doing more harm than good when practicing as unskilled clinicians to a complicated chemically dependent population. To attempt to counsel the addict and alcohol as a master's prepared individual without such expertise is simply unethical.

"Primum non nocere" meaning "first, do no harm" is the credo of any ethical professional counselor. Our legislature needs to support such ethics in our professionals.

"Watering down" therapy by legally allowing less than qualified LADCs may be cost effective short term. However it is not cost effective in the long run when the results of such treatment are reflected in the client's family, community, employment, not to mention legal and rehabilitation expenditures.

Thank you for your time. Again, please restore the prior existing language for criteria of the Licensed Alcohol Drug Counselor by repealing Section 10 (pertaining to Alcohol and Drug Counselors) of PA-12-197SHB5514. It is the right thing to do.