



CT Association for Addiction Professionals

Raised Bill No. 1065 LCO No. 4107

My name is Barbara Fox and I am the immediate past Vice President for the Northeast Region of NAADAC – The National Association for Addiction Professionals. I am currently the Vice President for the CT Association for Addiction Professionals, better known as CAAP, the CT affiliate of NAADAC.

Last year the 13 year old licensing law for addiction counselors was revised and two very important components of the original law were either changed or removed. In Section 20-74s Sections 19, (d) and (e) (3) of our general statutes, the master's degree requirement was changed and the requirement for education in addiction specific education was removed.

These changes have dramatically transformed our licensing law for addiction counselors. Someone with no training or education in addiction specific areas and a master's degree outside of behavioral health, could, with 18 graduate credit hours in counseling, eventually be deemed eligible to obtain a license to practice addiction counseling in CT.

We, as a profession, locally and nationally have been working to bring our profession into alignment with other behavioral healthcare professionals like social workers and licensed professional counselors. Currently there are approximately 30 states with either licensing laws on the books or waiting to introduce such legislation.

It can be said that this is a national movement to have addiction professionals join the ranks of other behavioral health specialists. Addiction counseling is seen as a unique specialty among health care providers and we, the advocates for the addiction professional, work continually to make sure we are seen as a separate and vital profession within the health care community. To this end we have in place national scopes of practice and career ladder for substance use disorder counseling along with an accrediting body for addiction studies programs in colleges and universities.

To support this even further, Title V of the Affordable Care Act, The Healthcare Workforce, SEC. 5002 gives this definition:

The term 'mental health service professional' means an individual with a graduate or post-graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in psychiatry, psychology, and other areas like, social work, substance abuse disorder prevention and treatment, marriage and family or professional counseling.

I'd like to thank you for your time and I hope you can support our efforts to strengthening the standards for licensed addiction professionals in CT.

Barbara K. Fox
Vice President
CT Association for Addiction Professionals