

Testimony on SB 471: AAC Mental and Behavioral Health Services
Public Health Committee
March 19, 2014

Submitted By: Eileen M. Russo, MA, LADC

I would like to begin by extending my appreciation and gratitude for the passing of the 2013 Licensure Law. However, less than one year later, I am very concerned about Section 2 (C) of SB 471. If passed, this amendment will reverse the 2013 licensure legislation passed by the 2013 General Assembly to ensure that individuals seeking to attain a LADC possess a degree in a counseling related field. Section 2 (C) creates a grandfathering provision of “another subject approved by the commissioner, provided the semester hours in a subject other than counseling or a counseling-related subject were completed or in progress on or before July 1, 2013”. I strongly urge that you delete and remove -Section 2 (C) of SB 471. If this provision should pass, it will once again undermine and jeopardize the recognized LADC credential. This grandfather provision is loosely defined, is not time limited, and allows almost anyone to seek licensure without a counseling or behavioral health related degree. This would be unheard of in social work, marriage and family therapy or professional counseling and has the potential to harm those seeking treatment for substance use disorders. In March 2013 I submitted testimony that said in part:

“The current requirements for knowledge, skills and attitudes of addiction professionals include eight (8) practice dimensions that cover one hundred twenty three (123) competency areas. The depth of these areas span the ability to screen for and diagnose substance use disorders, assess for impact of these disorders, develop treatment plans, provide counseling to individuals and families, use evidence based treatment approaches, make referrals, and write clinical notes and reports. The expected level of performance of providing services is in keeping with the expectations of licensed clinical social workers and professional counselors when performing social work duties or general counseling. The key difference is that being able to treat substance use disorders is a specialization, similar to a medical doctor choosing a specialty area such as cardiology.”

I once again call upon your leadership to **please delete and remove Sec 2. (C) in Raised Bill 471.**

Respectfully submitted,

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