

CARE
Consortium of Addiction Recovery Educators

March 17, 2014

RE: Request to Delete Section 2(C) of SB 471

To whom it may concern:

This statement is written to request that the Public Health Committee **DELETE Section 2(C) of SB 471**, a proposal concerning requirements for persons seeking CT licensure as Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC). This current proposal supports eliminating the requirement that candidates seeking the LADC will have earned a master's degree in counseling or an associated behavioral health arena. This current proposal instead would substitute any master's degree, even in a non-related focus of study, as a requirement, thus lowering the highest educational standards for persons seeking licensure in the uniquely specialized field of addiction recovery counseling.

Graduates of master's level programs in counseling or an associated behavioral health arena (with an emphasis on education and training in counseling theories and techniques, group counseling, professional issues/ethical standards and the law, multicultural concerns, research and the process of supervision, as well as coursework in the specialized areas of addiction recovery) bring to the addiction recovery profession a client centered, strength based, holistic philosophy and the associated, highly specialized evidence based practices that support the complex needs of persons seeking recovery.

It is important to note the following:

1. Licensure requirements in CT for an LMFT include a graduate degree in Marital and Family Therapy;
2. Licensure requirements in CT for a LCSW include a graduate degree or doctorate from an accredited social work program;
3. Licensure requirements in CT for an LPC include a master's degree or doctorate in counseling, psychology or a related behavioral health/mental health program

It is vital that CT maintains the same high standard of a master's level education in professional counseling or a related behavioral health field for candidates seeking licensure as an LADC.

It is also important to note the following:

1. ACA, the American Counseling Association, advocates for the requirement of a master's degree in counseling as a national standard for licensure in all fields of behavioral health.
2. NAADAC, the National Association for Addiction Recovery Professionals, requires candidates for NAADAC's highest certification as a Master Addiction Counselor have earned a master's degree in counseling, family therapy, psychology or another related human services.
3. The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) requires a master's degree in counseling in order to gain National Certified Counselor (NCC) recognition. NBCC

also provides the Master Addiction Counselor recognition to those persons who have earned a master's degree in counseling and NCC status and demonstrated education and skills in the highly specialized area of addiction recovery counseling.

Connecticut has always provided national leadership in developing professional standards and programs to meet the needs of its residents seeking recovery. By eliminating LADC licensure requirements for a master's degree or higher in counseling or a behavioral health field (with specialized coursework and training in addiction recovery counseling), Connecticut's LADC licensure will not achieve professional parity with the same high standards of education and training that Connecticut requires of other professionals licensed by the CT Dept. of Public Health and by national professional organizations, certifying bodies and federal agencies.

It is vital that the Public Health committee and CT legislature maintain the current LADC requirement of a master's degree in counseling or another associated behavioral health program, not only to support the highest standards of CT licensure as an LADC, but also to promote the highest standards of education, professionalism and leadership for present and future clinicians who work with CT residents seeking their stated goals of recovery.

We, therefore, request that the Public Health committee **DELETE Section 2(C) of SB 471** concerning requirements for persons seeking CT licensure as Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC). Thank you.

Judith Rosenberg, PhD, CRC, LPC
Professor Counselor Education and Family Therapy
Coordinator Professional and Rehabilitation Counselor Program
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT

CARE
Consortium of Addiction Recovery Educators
Founder

Maggie Amara, MS, LADC, LPC
Adjunct Faculty
Counselor Education and Family Therapy
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT

CARE
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Member