



Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals

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March 10, 2016

House Health and Human Services Committee

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 449

Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee,

Madame Chair and Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Steve Denny. I am the Director of Clinical Services at Four County Mental Health Center located in southeast Kansas.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Licensed Clinical Addictions Counselor. I am testifying on behalf of the Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals, the state's trade association for the alcohol and drug prevention and treatment field.

The Behavioral Health Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB) has introduced SB 449 that proposes many changes to their current statutes governing the licensure of individuals working in behavioral health such as professional counselors, social workers and addiction counselors.

I will be limiting my remarks to the proposed changes for addiction counselors.

KAAP supports the BSRB's efforts to improve and clarify the statutory language for the professions. In particular, the Association applauds the addition of the Licensed Masters Addiction Counselor that mirrors the other disciplines licensed by the BSRB.

Current law for addiction counselors includes only the opportunity to be licensed at either a bachelor's level or at a master's level clinical license. The bachelor's level license (LAC) cannot diagnose but must work in a Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services licensed treatment facility or where exempted by law. Individuals with a clinical addiction counselor license (LCAC) are allowed to work independently such as in private practice.

KAAP also supports the amended language regarding reciprocity. Under the current statute, the requirements for individuals seeking licensure, who have received an addiction counselor license from another state, is very restrictive. The BSRB is proposing amended language that preserves the intent of the counselor licensure law while recognizing equivalent training and education that was obtained outside of Kansas.

I thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.