

November 16th, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

It was a good day for behavioral health practitioners and the Arizona Council for Human Service Providers (ACHSP)!

As you know, the stakeholders have been meeting with the Board of Behavioral Health Examiners to remedy multiple concerns, including issues around reciprocity, supervision and curriculum. The stakeholder group has grown significantly since July 2012 and includes representatives from all four professional organizations, representatives from ASU, NAU, University of Phoenix, Ottawa University, Prescott College, CACREP specialists, and other interested organizations. The stakeholders have unanimously agreed on a variety of state statute changes that will be presented to legislators. These include a change to the current Reciprocity/Reciprocal License statute which will eliminate the need for one year of clinical supervision, changes to the curriculum statutes that also provide an opportunity for educational institutions to seek prior program approval, additional definition of terms, clarification of supervision requirements and much more. In fact, the ACHSP has proposed a comprehensive restructuring of the Board and the establishment of an impaired professionals program (something that was agreed to and written into statute in 2008).

Today, the BBHE went before the Committee of Reference of Joint Legislative Audit which makes recommendations on the continuation of the agency, any conditions for continuation and the length of time before the agency's next review. Prior to this appearance the BBHE procedures were scrutinized by the Office of the Auditor General. The Auditor General presented their findings as did a number of professionals and stakeholder group members. Additionally, the ACHSP and its attorney briefly presented proposed changes. The Committee of Reference members asked questions of the speakers and then asked the BBHE to respond. The BBHE was given time to present its case and the members of the Committee of Reference expressed grave concerns about the BBHE processes and performance. The BBHE's executive director and its representatives were asked poignant questions and critiqued by the panel for not being responsive to the members it regulates and for not seeking statutory remedies that were clearly called over the past six years.

The outcome vote by the panel was unanimous. The BBHE was instructed to be open to making necessary changes and the Committee of Reference asked them to "fully embrace the changes we recommend....". The Committee of Reference agreed to review the BBHE again in four years and to have the Auditor General monitor them every 6-18 months.

The next steps will be to continue meeting with the stakeholders and revise and create new statutes which will be turned into a Bill that must pass both the House and the Senate. This will happen over the

next six months. During that time, you may be asked to write to your legislators in support. We will continue to keep you updated and share additional information received from the ACHSP.

Best regards,

Patricia Bonnay and Richard Poppy
Therapeutic Practitioners Alliance of Arizona

P.S. As you can see, we are developing a website to keep you informed. What information would you like to see on the website? Let us know!