

# TALKING POINTS

## HB 410

1. The members of the Executive Departments and Administration (ED&A) Committee, after studying this issue over the summer, researching national data, and consulting with individuals from the mental health, substance abuse and psychiatric communities unanimously voted to recommend that the full House of Representatives pass HB 410.
2. HB 410 ensures that Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors who are masters prepared or higher are no longer prohibited by law from treating individuals with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders.
3. HB 410 increases access to quality treatment for substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders for the citizens of New Hampshire.
4. HB 410 does not allow MLADC's to treat mental illness alone...only when it occurs in an individual who also has a substance use disorder and only within the context of treating the substance use disorder.
5. **How does HB410 insure that persons licensed under the Board of Alcohol and Drug Professionals have the necessary competencies to provide integrated treatment to persons with substance abuse and co-occurring mental health disorders?**
  - The educational requirements for the MLADC include the same content as the requirements for the masters level licensure in any of the mental health disciplines IN ADDITION TO specific education on substance abuse.
  - The education and training requirements for the LADC already requires comprehensive education and training in substance abuse specific assessment and treatment required by no other mental health discipline.
  - The educational requirements for the MLADC include additional education in the specialized area of the assessment, differential diagnosis and integration of approaches to co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.
  - HB410 requires that MLADC's either
    - Hold two licenses; one as a LADC and one as a licensed mental health professional; or
    - Take two nationally recognized examinations; one testing their competency in substance abuse counseling and one testing their competency in the treatment of mental health disorders when they occur in conjunction with substance use disorders;

- The national examination testing counselor proficiency in the treatment of co-occurring disorders requires that, counselors have
      - 2000 hours of work experience in the treatment of co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders;
      - 100 hours of clinical supervision in the delivery of integrated care to persons with co-occurring disorders; before they can sit for the International Written Co-occurring Disorders Examination.
  - Alcohol and Drug Counselors, like all mental health practitioners, are subject to a code of ethics (NAADAC: The Association of Addictions Professionals) that prohibits them from practicing outside of the scope of their training and skill. However, HB410 goes on to specify that persons licensed under RSA 330-C must adhere to the ethical standards of the profession. Therefore, failure to do so leaves them subject to discipline by the Board, and not just by their professional association.

## **6. Why not regulate MLADC's under the Board of Mental Health Practice?**

- The Board of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Professional Practice has members who have the education, training and experience to adequately oversee the expanded scope of practice.
- Maintaining the LADC and the MLADC under the auspices of one board will support a career ladder for alcohol and drug counselors by facilitating the creation of standards that allow for the LADC and Certified Recovery Support Worker training and education to serve as a basis to be built upon in working toward the MLADC.
  - Separating the MLADC from the other alcohol and drug abuse counselor licenses and certifications
    - i. undermines the integrity of the Board;
    - ii. interferes in the smooth transition between levels of licensure;
    - iii. serves as a disincentive for counselors to seek further education and training to increase their skill and level of licensure, thereby serving as a disincentive to the development of a workforce sufficient to meet the needs of the clients we serve.
- MLADC's are not only licensed to treat co-occurring disorders, but also to treat the single substance use diagnoses, thereby making their oversight by the Board of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Professional Practice both logical and preferable.
- HB 410 does more to protect consumers and the public than any other licensing law.
  - The Board of Mental Health Practice only chooses to license persons with masters degrees or above. The people who provide direct services in our hospitals, treatment centers, and clinics are not regulated or overseen by the Board.
  - HB 410 has created tiers of licensing and certification of substance abuse practitioners at all levels of practice to ensure that standards of training, education, supervision, and comporment are set and vigilantly overseen.