

THE COUNSELING ADVOCATE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO COUNSELING ASSOCIATION'S
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE



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CHECKING IN AND THINKING AHEAD

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS AND AN UPDATE ON THE FALL 2020 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The editors of The Counseling Advocate send our gratitude to everyone who has engaged in the critical processes of professional and client advocacy this year. As members of the OCA Government Relations Committee, we are grateful for the opportunity to engage with members and learn about the work you're doing. This connection enhances our service to the field and to the clients we serve. We also look forward to connecting with you each quarter through this newsletter. It is an honor to provide you with OCA GRC news, and we are eager to continue this work in 2021.

--Maddie Stevens and Staci Tessmer, editors of The Counseling Advocate

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We also thank those who filled out the Fall 2020 OCA GRC Needs Assessment survey, which has helped our committee focus efforts as we move into 2021. Results from the survey (n=99) ranked the following seven agenda items, respectively:

- (1) ACA Interstate Compact for portability of licensure between states
- (2) Ban Conversion Therapy for Minors in Ohio
- (3) Universal Licensing Law (requires Ohio to reciprocate licensure between states) -- Senate Bill 246
- (4) Insurance Parity Bill -- Senate Bill 254
- (5) Mental Health Hold Expansion to include counselors
- (6) COVID-19 Response
- (7) Prescriptive Authority Expansion

We will be in touch with those who expressed interest in helping with the above issues as we begin to mobilize our efforts.

If you would like to engage with the GRC in 2021, please email Ellise.raghavan@rockets.utoledo.edu.

-Ellie Raghavan, OCA GRC Intern



HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY? SHARE IT IN THE ADVOCATE!

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



Senate Bill 246

Universal Licensure Law for Occupational Licensing

Originally reported on in *The Counseling Advocate* volume 1, issue 1

The bill remains in the General Government and Agency Review committee. The most recent revision in the bill was to add the stipulation that an applicant for a license must have a "substantially similar" out-of-state license which allows them to engage in the same profession, instead of just holding an out-of-state license that would allow them to engage in the same profession. The OCA will remain active in monitoring this bill as there is some anticipation that this bill will be accepted by the Senate committee in the coming weeks.

House Bill 443/Senate Bill 284

Ohio Mental Health Parity and Equity Act

Originally reported on in *The Counseling Advocate* volume 1, issue 1

This initiative continues to progress with the House Insurance Committee adopting amendments to SB 284 for the parity alignment and enforcement for commercial plans and Medicaid. The SB has been passed by the Senate, and it is expected, that once the House passes the bill, the Senate will just need to concur in order to send it to the Governor.

Administrative Rule 5122-2-17

Counselors in Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services

In October, the OCA successfully advocated for the inclusion of Counselors in an Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services rule to specifically state that counselors can be a part of treatment teams in psychiatric hospitals.

Medicaid Updates

- Medicaid has filed amendments regarding telehealth ([OAC 5160-1-18](#)), fidelity review requirements for mental health assertive community treatment service ([OAC 5160-27-04](#)), and mental health intensive home based treatment services ([OAC 5160-27-05](#)).
- OCA continues to advocate for 100% Medicaid reimbursement for counselors. On November 8, 2020 OCA provided comments to the Ohio Department of Medicaid requesting an amendment to rule 5160-8-05 to allow 100% reimbursement for counselors. On December 2, the ODM responded stating they were not modifying reimbursement rates to providers covered by this rule. OCA will continue to this advocacy effort.

Legislative Advocacy Day 2021

LAD is scheduled for April 13th 2021.

We are planning to meet in person in Columbus, Ohio. However, if the event is unable to take place in person, we will conduct a virtual event on the same date. It will be either in person or virtual, not a hybrid. See you then!



MEMBERS SPEAK OUT:

INTERDISCIPLINARY SUPERVISION

In September 2020, the OCSWMFT Board voted to allow 50 of the 150 "training" supervision hours (supervision to obtain the LPCC) to be completed by an independently licensed professional other than a LPCC-S. This change toward interdisciplinary supervision would be in opposition to recommendations from the American Counseling Association. The OCA Government Relations Committee sought OACES member feedback on this potential change. Thirty-seven percent of OACES members responded to a short survey that solicited their opinions. A clear majority opinion was seen with 91% of respondents stating that they are not in support of allowing 1/3 of "training" supervision to come from non-LPCC-S professionals. These OACES members voiced concern that allowing non-LPCC-s professionals to complete a portion of supervision training would compromise professional identity, role, and responsibility. A small portion of respondents (9%) reported support for the proposed change. These dissenting responses noted that access to competent supervision is the utmost priority and that supervision from other professionals can be valuable learning opportunities.

Voices at work: Since the vote to approve the changes in training supervision, the board has yet to move forward with enacting those changes. The board has since identified the chief concern as LPC's inability to access LPCC-S who are willing to conduct supervision. OCA is committed to provide the board alternative solutions to the identified concerns while maintaining 100% of training supervision within the field of counseling.

During the GRC annual legislative update at AOCC 2021, Molly Mottram and Jana Jarrett from the Ohio Department of Insurance conducted the **ODI Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits Training**. During the session, we discussed why the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equality Act is so important, discussed the role ODI plays in regulating Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits, helped providers understand how to utilize the complaint and appeals process on behalf of their patients, and explained the tools and resources ODI provides to help navigate Mental Health and Substance Use Benefits.

More information can be found [here](#).

Thank you to Molly and Jana for joining us!

