

Agency Response to Economic Impact Analysis

The Board of Counseling does not concur with the analysis of the Department of Planning and Budget for amendments to 18 VAC 115-30-10 et seq. for certification of substance abuse counselors and substance abuse counseling assistants.

The analysis questions the value of a requirement in the regulation that an applicant for certification as a substance abuse counselor must hold a bachelor's degree. Such a requirement is specifically mandated by the Code of Virginia, so the Board has no option other than imposing the requirement for certification. Section 54.1-3507.1 C of the Code of Virginia specifies: "Pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board, an applicant for certification as a substance abuse counselor shall submit evidence satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has (i) completed a specified number of hours of didactic substance abuse education courses in a program or programs recognized or approved by the Board **and received a bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Board**; and (ii) accumulated a specified number of hours of experience involving the practice of substance abuse treatment while supervised by a licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, or by any other mental health professional licensed by the Department, or by a certified substance abuse counselor who shall submit evidence satisfactory to the Board of clinical supervision qualifications pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board, such number of hours being greater than the number of hours required of a certified substance abuse counseling assistant."

The requirement is clearly mandated by the Code. For the Board to certify an individual who did not hold a bachelor's degree would place the Board out of compliance with the law.