

THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF COUNSELING

Public Hearing on Regulations Governing:

The Practice of Professional Counseling;
The Practice of Marriage and Family Therapist; and
The Practice of Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioners

February 13, 2004

A Public Hearing was held for the Virginia Board of Counseling on Friday February 13, 2004 at the Department of Health Professions, 6603 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia. The hearing was held pursuant to the Administrative Process Act, Section 2.2 - 4000A et seq. of the Code of Virginia and the Board of Counseling's Public Participation Guidelines.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive public comments on the Board's proposal to establish requirements for continuing competency. This action is being taken in accordance with statutory mandate that the Board promulgate regulations for continuing competency. A summary of all comments presented at this hearing will be mailed to all participants.

PRESIDING BOARD MEMBER: Pamela Siegel, LPC.

STAFF PRESENT: Benjamin Foster, Deputy Executive Director

PARTICIPANTS: Donna Willett
Renee Staton, VCA
Kimberly Liles, District 19, CSB
Edward Cannon, VCA
Roger La Place, VACC
Gibbs Arthur, VCA

Ms. Pamela Siegel, LPC, Presiding Board Member called the hearing to order at 10:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Donna Willett, LPC, LMFT, spoke on behalf of herself as a dual licensee of the Board. Ms. Willett expressed her concerns regarding the issue of contact hour versus continuing education unit (CEU). Having not seen the regulatory language prior to the hearing Ms.

Willett was also concerned with what types of courses would be acceptable as well as what organizations would be acceptable as providers.

Renee Staton, President-Elect of the Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) voiced the organizations support for continuing education requirements by the Board. Ms. Staton said that VCA had pushed for several years to make continuing education a requirement. She also stated that VCA intends to be a provider of continuing education courses as well as possibly approving other providers.

Kimberly Liles, District 19 Community Service Board (CSB). Ms. Liles spoke about concerns at CSB's as to whether many of the trainings and in-services currently occurring would count toward continuing education credit. Specifically, would a CSB be considered an approved provider under these proposed regulations? Ms. Liles said that many of the questions she had intended to ask had been asked by Ms. Willett and Ms. Staton.

Edward Cannon, a member of VCA, expressed his support for continuing education requirements as a condition of licensure renewal.

Roger Laplace, Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors (VACC). Mr. Laplace provided information on the role of the VACC in creation of legislation to establish the continuing education requirement. He also talked about the history of VACC.

Mr. Laplace expressed concerns that a portion of the hours, preferably the ethics portion should be obtained in a face-to-face situation. He pointed out that by looking at the Boards' newsletter you can see that many of the disciplinary actions are for boundary or practice type violations. VACC believes that the amount and seriousness of these violations necessitate a serious review of the ethics of practice. A thorough review of ethics can not be accomplished by independent or on-line study. When asked whether he believed such courses would be available in all geographic locations of the State Mr. Laplace said that he believed that if there was a market many groups and associations would create and provide the course.

Gibbs L. Arthur, Executive Director, Virginia Counselors Association. Mr. Arthur stated that the VCA endorses wholeheartedly the proposed continuing education requirements being promulgated by the Board. He read excerpts from written comment that he later provided to Board staff.

There being no other persons to speak Ms. Siegel adjourned the hearing at 11:15 p.m.