

# Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

*Deb Chroniak 271-1403*

**SB 54**, relative to the licensure of alcohol and drug counselors.

**Hearing Date:** January 25, 2017

**Time Opened:** 9:42 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:57 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Carson, Reagan, Gannon, Soucy and Woodburn

**Members of the Committee Absent:** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill increases the number of hours of alcohol and drug use education required for initial licensure as a master license alcohol and drug counselor or as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. D'Allesandro

Sen. Lasky

**Who supports the bill:** Senator D'Allesandro, Senator Lasky, Kelly Luedtke, President, New Hampshire Alcohol & Drug Counselors Association (NHADACA); Lori Magoon, New Hampshire Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors Association; Attorney Michele D. Merritt, Policy Director, new Futures

**Who opposes the bill:** Dr. Joe Hannon, SOS Recovery Community Organization

**Summary of Testimony presented in Support:**

**Senator D'Allesandro stated the following:**

- This bill increases the number of hours necessary for alcohol and drug use education from 270 to 300 hours.
- Lines 6, 10, and 16 of this legislation cover this compliance change.
- Members of the NHADACA Board are present to discuss.
- Additional hours have to do with reciprocity and certification.
- There is a tremendous demand for drug abuse and alcohol education.

**Kelly Luedtke, President, NHADACA (in support):**

- Chair of the licensing board for alcohol and drug professionals.
- Reciprocity is a benefit of passing the bill, but the bill also is about meeting minimum requirements for their credentialing board (International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium)(IC & RC).
- IC & RC set testing and education standards.

- The increase in hours comes from the IC & RC to meet minimum requirements. **Senator Reagan** asked about reciprocity for where? Ms. Luedtke stated for reciprocity and for initial licensures. Senator Reagan asked if that was a national standard. Ms. Luedtke stated national and international.

**Senator Soucy** asked about the effective date on this legislation and if that could be pushed out until January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Ms. Luedtke said the IC & RC requires this to be completed by October of this year. She stated they would not be in compliance for the additional few months she is requesting.

**Senator Woodburn** asked if reciprocity included all New England states as part of the compact. Ms. Luedtke said that every New England state is included with the exception of Maine.

**Senator Gannon** asked, in training people with these credentials, what is the shortage. Mr. Luedtke said presently there were over 400 licensed alcohol and drug counselors (LADC) and certified recover support workers (CRSW) in the state. There is definitely a need for more.

**Lori Magoon, Master Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (MLADC), Private Practice (in support):**

- Speaking on behalf of the licensing board.
- Would like to talk more about a clinician working within the state.
- Would be helpful to have more training. Have opioid epidemic – need as much training as possible.
- Working as an independent clinician she sees the importance of working with families who are dealing with loss.
- Believes the passage of this legislation would benefit New Hampshire.

**Senator Reagan** asked why it takes years of full-time supervision to get someone to be able to practice. Ms. Magoon said there is a lot to do when counseling people with substance abuse issues. The epidemic they are facing is more of a brain disease.

**Senator Woodburn** said with the repeal of the “Affordable Care Act”, a major provider of substance abuse treatment and recovery services, if this were to go away, would that not bring the numbers down. Ms. Magoon said she did not believe so, with one college class (6 hours of training) which will allow us to continue to be an IC & RC state. **Senator Woodburn** said if the Affordable Care Act were repealed we would have less demand for these services. **Senator Carson stated that the licensing board would like to stay involved with the IC & RC organization, and could she supply the committee members with that information for their review.** Ms. Magoon indicated that she could do that. **Senator Carson asked for this information in a timely manner.**

**Attorney Michele Merritt, Policy Director, New Futures (in support) (testimony provided):**

- **Senator Woodburn** asked Attorney Merritt if she could shed some light on supply and demand for counselors if the “Affordable Care Act” goes away, and

will we still need as many counselors in this area. **Attorney Merritt** stated that before Medicaid Expansion and the Affordable Care Act, New Hampshire served between 4,000 and 6,000. Since then the number has expanded dramatically. There is sufficient utilization within the private insurance market, some served in-state and some served out-of-state. Within the N.H. Health Protection Program there has been an expansion of 11,000 people.

- If clinicians are not brought into compliance, there would be a loss of certification for IC & RC and those from out-of-state would have to apply in New Hampshire as a new licensee.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:**

Dr. Joe Hannon, in long-term recovery for twenty-five years (in opposition)

- Actively involved in the recovery community; SOS Recovery Community Organization.
- Involved and working towards the certified recovery sport worker.
- The demand is out there for these workers (counselors).
- One thing they looked at with his involvement in many task forces is that these people are in demand, and further, they are not paid enough.
- Raising the bar for federal licensing is not a bad thing, but doing this quickly if there are people trying to be hired within the next two to three months, this could cut some people off.
- Counselors presently get extensive training.
- If reciprocity is the main reason to increase the required hours, and we want to keep these workers within the state, giving them a reason to leave the state is not the way to do it.

Hearing closed at 9:57 a.m.

**Future Action:** Pending

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Date hearing report completed: January 27, 2017