

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



## MHRS Bulletin

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### **CERTIFIED ADDICTIONS COUNSELORS (CAC) AND THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH REHABILITATION SERVICES (MHRS)**

The purpose of this Bulletin is to clarify the role of the CAC in the provision of the MHRS. Based on District of Columbia law and regulations, a CAC who does not have an additional license as a doctor, psychologist, APRN, social worker or professional counselor may not provide mental health treatment except for those symptoms which are a direct or indirect result of addiction, chemical dependency, abuse of chemical substances, or related disorders. To do otherwise is a violation of their licensing requirements. To the extent that 22 DCMR A34 regulations which specify that a CAC may act as a qualified practitioner or provide mental health treatment are in conflict with the scope and restrictions of the CAC licensing requirements, the CAC licensing requirements supersede MHRS regulations. Each provider is responsible for ensuring that any CAC employee on staff acts within the scope of practice of a certified addiction counselor and complies with all requirements of practice.

#### References:

22 DCMR A3413.3 Qualified practitioners and credentialed staff shall provide MHRS to the extent permitted by and in accordance with District law. Credentialed staff shall be authorized to provide MHRS or components of MHRS under the supervision of an appropriate qualified practitioner in accordance with applicable federal and District law.

D.C. Code §3-1208.51, Certified addiction counselor I  
D.C. Code §3-1208.52, Certified addiction counselor II  
D.C. Code §3-1208.53, Advanced practice addiction counselor

D.C. Code § 3-1201.02 (1A)

(1A) "Practice of addiction counseling" means providing services, with or without compensation, based on theory and methods of counseling, psychotherapy, and addictionology to persons who are

experiencing cognitive, affective, or behavioral psycho-social dysfunction as a direct or indirect result of addiction, chemical dependency, abuse of chemical substances, or related disorders. The practice of addiction counseling includes:

- (A) Addiction prevention;
- (B) Crisis intervention;
- (C) Diagnosis;
- (D) Referral;
- (E) Direct treatment;
- (F) Follow-up, which is rendered to individuals, families, groups, organizations, schools, and communities adversely affected by addictions or related disorders; and
- (G) The education and training of persons in the field of addiction counseling.

In order to provide the services outlined above a CAC level I or II must be under the direct supervision of one of the following licensed staff:

- (A) Licensed Advanced Practice Addictions Counselor
- (B) Psychiatrist
- (C) Psychologist
- (D) Licensed Professional Counselor
- (E) License Independent Clinical Social Worker
- (F) Registered Nurse

17 DCMR Chapter 87, Certified Addiction Counselor I and II.

17 DCMR 8716.1 A person who is certified in the District of Columbia solely as an addiction counselor I or II and is either not licensed to practice medicine, psychology, or professional counseling pursuant to D.C. Official § 3-1205.01, or not licensed as an advanced practice registered nurse pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 3-1206.01, or not licensed as an independent clinical social worker pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 3-1208.04, shall not perform psychotherapy or engage in the diagnosis or treatment of other mental health disorders.

If you have additional questions please contact Your Provider Relations Specialist