



Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland
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Dedicated to the well-being of our clients and the professional development

March 18, 2014

Dear Executive Director Richard Yep, President Cirecie West-Olatunji, President-Elect Robert Smith, Dr. David Kaplan, and Art Terrazas:

Thank you for meeting with representatives of the Maryland and Massachusetts chapters of AMHCA, the New Jersey Counseling Coalition, and other concerned counselors on February 21, 2014. It was reassuring to hear your commitment to *all* counselors.

It was also encouraging to learn more about the work of ACA professional staff members in advocating for all counselors, including efforts to make Tricare, VA, and Medicare policy and practice more inclusive.

To further support ACA's mission of supporting all counselors, the following agreements were made:

- 1. *The President and President-elect will use their columns in Counseling Today and other media outlets, including ACA Connect, to communicate ACA's support for all counselors.***
- 2. *ACA will actively promote licensure, school certification, and hiring for all qualified applicants. It will publicly oppose CACREP-only restrictions.***
 - a. ACA President Cirecie West-Olatunji and CSJ Governing Council representative Judy Daniels will partner to address Governing Council (GC) concerns, including the motion passed by GC in October.
 - b. ACA representative Art Terrazas will partner with LCPCM lobbyist, Ellin Nolan, to assure that all counselors are included in ACA-supported legislative, regulatory, and policy initiatives. This will include developing more inclusive grandfathering language for Tricare/VA eligibility as an interim measure while new language/regulations that include current and future students, regardless of program-accreditation status, is being developed .
 - c. ACA will clarify that the IOM report was based on incomplete and incorrect information and will lobby for revisiting/amending the IOM report.
 - d. ACA will meet with NBCC, ideally with members of this group, to promote easy access to testing for TRICARE grandfathering without additional course requirements for long standing practitioners.
- 3. *ACA will support all counselors through the new Center for Research, Practice, and Policy by sponsoring research that examines ethical and effective practice for all counselors.***

We would also like to reiterate suggestions made during the meeting that have not yet been fully addressed. We additionally request:

1. ACA to send a letter to all licensure boards about the value of *all* counselors graduating from regionally accredited university programs.
2. Additional articles in *Counseling Today* that emphasize points raised in the meeting.
3. Encourage diverse representation on all ACA committees that includes representatives of programs that are not accredited by CACREP.

We also agreed to follow up in one month for a progress check and to consider further ways to continue to partner.

Thank you again for your commitment to ACA and all counselors. We look forward to the agreed-upon one month follow up and continued partnership.

Respectfully Submitted by the Officers of:

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland

The New Jersey Counseling Coalition

The Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association