



GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

BUREAU OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES
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Dear Behavioral Health Stakeholders:

The NH Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery supports the expansion of effective approaches to treating individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) and co-occurring mental health disorders (COD). The Commission has supported the state's Health Protection Program (NHHPP) and its robust SUD benefit; however, it also recognizes the need to expand the provider network to meet treatment demand, particularly in light of the state's opioid epidemic.

The need to expand the SUD and COD treatment provider network was also identified by a work group of stakeholders convened by New Futures to provide input to the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the NHHPP SUD benefit.

This stakeholder group identified the importance of the capacity of the behavioral health service system and practitioners to support effective SUD treatment within their service array. These stakeholders that included provider and professional associations, behavioral health practitioners, managed care organizations, DHHS staff, and others then established a work group to establish a set of recommended competencies and activities for existing licensed behavioral health professionals to increase their range of skills and expertise to support effective treatment of substance use disorders.

The Commission supports these recommendations and recognizes their importance to several strategy areas from the state's five-year plan, [Collective Action-Collective Impact](#), to address alcohol and other drug misuse, most notably the following recommended action:

- Promote and support cross-training of mental health and substance abuse treatment practitioners, incorporating information about alcohol and drug misuse and mental health correlations into existing training programs (*Collective Action-Collective Impact*, pg 7)

The enclosed document of recommended core competencies has been reviewed and endorsed by the Commission and its Treatment Task Force. It is being shared with professional associations, mental health service providers, independent practitioners, payers, and policy makers to encourage the state's behavioral health professionals to expand and enhance their skills and expertise to better serve adolescents and adults in New Hampshire who need treatment for SUD and/or COD.

A list of possible uses for the core competency recommendations is enclosed following this letter. We hope that you will use them to expand and improve treatment access, availability and efficacy in our state.

For more information about the competencies described, you may contact the New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors Association (NHADACA) at 603-225-7060 or at traininginstitute@nhadaca.org. NHADACA has also endorsed these recommendations and has developed guidelines to support practitioners in achieving these competencies.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and to expanding access to quality treatment services.

Respectfully,



Timothy Rourke

Chair

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NHHPP SUD Benefit Stakeholders include NH DHHS, NH Charitable Foundation, New Futures, NH Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors Association, NH AOD Services Providers Association, NH Center for Excellence, NH Training Institute on Addictive Disorders, NH Community Behavioral Health Association, Bi-State Primary Care, NAMI - NH

USING THE CORE COMPETENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

The network adequacy work group of the NHHPP Stakeholders committee provided suggested activities that stakeholders could engage in to share the enclosed core competency recommendations:

All Stakeholders

- Endorsement and dissemination of the recommendations to support an expanding and highly skilled work force

Training and Professional Development Organizations

- Consideration of these recommendations to develop a “core competency track” for current licensed behavioral health practitioners that is affordable and accessible for those currently in practice to support them in their treatment of SUDs and CODs

State Agencies

- Encouragement for the use of these recommendations in rulemaking/contract language with MCOs to support quality assurance for those delivering SUD/COD treatment under MCO agreement
- Endorsement/use of these recommendations to support quality assurance metrics and accountability
- Dissemination to the community health center system as they begin to integrate behavioral health and SUD treatment services into their practices

NH’s Managed Care Organizations’ Behavioral Health insurers

- Endorsement/use of recommendations as a component of quality assurance that is communicated to its behavioral health network providers and possible providers
- Consideration of recommendations for providers to demonstrate competency to treat SUDs/CODs and/or to list behavioral health providers as having a specialty area re SUDs/CODs

State Loan Repayment Programs

- Consideration relative to its loan repayment program criteria so that professional development recommendations could be considered for loan repayment funds

NH Department of Insurance

- Consideration of recommendations to establish specialty expertise for behavioral health providers delivering SUD treatment within the provider networks of private insurers authorized to sell and provide health insurance benefits in the state, and for those insurers who will be in the Exchange beginning January 2016

Behavioral Health Recruitment Centers

- Endorsement and/or dissemination of recommendations to members
- Consideration of recommendations relative to the efforts of Recruitment Centers for behavioral health positions in the state's community health center system

Behavioral Health Licensing Boards

- Consideration of recommendations as criteria to establish members who have a "specialty" area that is SUD and COD treatment
- Consideration of recommendations as component of recertification over time, given that a certain, and potentially high, percentage of individuals receiving treatment for mental health conditions misuse substances and/or have a SUD/COD.

Professional Associations of Social Workers, Mental Health Counselors, Marriage & Family Therapists, Psychologists, APRNs, and Alcohol and Drug Counselors, including the NH Community Mental Health Association, Bi-State, NHADACA, NASW, APA, and NHAODSPA

- Endorsement and dissemination of recommendations to members

NH Institutions of Higher Education

- For those who are or who plan to offer coursework for behavioral health majors, consideration of the recommendations for the development of SUD/COD specialty tracks, certificate programs, or other professional development/continuing education offerings