



California Consortium of
Addiction Programs and
Professionals

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NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento, California

Release: Immediate

Disaster Looming: Opioid overdoses and substance use disorder cases skyrocket while an antiquated addiction treatment infrastructure and a workforce in crisis create a recipe for disaster.

March 26, 2021, SACRAMENTO – Despite a growing substance use disorder (SUD) epidemic ravaging the country, the State of California has still not adopted an SUD licensure program for professionals dedicated to helping those suffering from the disease of addiction. While there has been an increase in demand for people attempting to obtain treatment, there unfortunately is a not a large enough, qualified workforce to help out. The California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP) has been the state’s largest and most vocal advocacy organization urging the passage of legislation to create a new license that would allow individuals to seek treatment from individual private practitioners.

Unfortunately, SUD professionals are looked at as paraprofessionals and not as “qualified” or legitimate as physicians and mental health therapists. Therefore, funding for the profession, and specifically the creation of an SUD counselor license, has not been allowed or made a priority. This is a problem for many reasons. The SUD workforce desperately needs to be expanded, especially when many in the industry are getting ready to retire, whilst the demand for treatment increases. However, even if people are inclined to go into the SUD counselor industry, they may not stay because there is no option to work up the career ladder to become licensed. Creating licensure would guarantee the SUD professionals would have the option to earn salaries commensurate with other behavioral health professionals. SUD counselors deserve to have the same prestige, respect and pay level as other health professionals, otherwise known as Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts (LPHAs). When this is possible, there will no doubt be in an influx of professionals in this industry to expand the workforce.

Another issue with California not having a SUD counselor licensure, is public safety. Without licensure, anyone is able to open an outpatient program or private practice and give unregulated services to those seeking help. This can lead to vulnerable people, who are trying to get help for their addiction, being victimized or taken advantage of and no one being held accountable for it. This can be detrimental to patients’ lives and lead to additional unethical practices opening.

The stigma and underlying bias towards the SUD profession and counselor licensure can undoubtedly be thought of when wondering why it has not been properly funded and created. SUD licensure has been hindered from lack of support from policy makers, as well as resistance from other professional advocacy organizations. Another factor is the detrimental notion that SUD professionals have not completed as much education as the other LPHAs, which with respect to SUD coursework, testing, and supervised work experience, is simply not true.

The reality is, until California adopts a SUD licensure, there will be no guarantee that the workforce can increase to adequately be able to handle and help those treatment. Furthermore, unethical people and practices are at leisure to take advantage of vulnerable people and their families, which simply cannot be allowed.

To read more about the lack of an adequately staffed and funded addiction treatment workforce and why California needs to adopt SUD licensure, visit:

[Disaster Looming: Opioid overdoses and substance use disorder cases skyrocket while an antiquated addiction treatment infrastructure and a workforce in crisis create a recipe for disaster. – Counselor Magazine](#)

If you are looking for help or resources for yourself or someone you love, please visit www.calrecovery.org or <https://bhap.us/membership/locate-treatment/#>.

About CCAPP

CCAPP is the largest statewide consortium of community-based profit and non-profit substance use disorder treatment agencies and addiction focused professionals, providing services to over 100,000 California residents annually in residential, outpatient, and private practice settings. It is our mission to inspire excellence and promote change through our focus on membership, advocacy, and governance. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.ccapp.us/>

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