

## President's Column: March 2016

Dear members,

I am delighted to write that I have accepted a second term as the WMHCA President, and will continue in my role for the 2016-17 year. We have been working hard to stabilize the organization in the past year, and I am hoping to continue working on my Presidential agenda for the next year. You may recall that these are to:

1. Identify a strategic plan for continuing education workshops that meets both state regulation requirements and emerging trends within the field;
2. Obtain Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP) status by the National Board of Certified Counselors for providing continuing education workshops that practitioners can count toward their national certifications;
3. Re-energize the graduate student committee and begin training students to become the next generation of leaders in both WMHCA and the counseling profession in Washington State.

So what has WMHCA been up to recently? WMHCA has continued to be quite active in serving its members through legislative advocacy. Karen Langer and I attended the most recent Advisory Committee meeting of the Mental Health Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Social Work professions at the Washington State Department of Health in Olympia. At the meeting, the committee continued work on writing draft rules for the regulation of counselor supervision. Currently, the committee is proposing that all three professions (MHC, MFT, SW) require their supervisors to complete 25 hours of "supervision-of-supervision" (i.e., be supervised by a senior counselor when providing supervision) prior to providing supervision to licensure candidates (e.g., LMHCAs). This would be a significant change in the preparation of supervisors in Washington State. At the meeting, WMHCA advocated for grandfathering provisions so current supervisors are not prohibited from supervising if they have not already completed these 25 hours of supervision-of-supervision. We are also continuing to push for the recognition of the Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS) credential through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) affiliate, the Centers for Credentialing and Education, so that supervisors with this credential are exempt from the proposed supervision-of-supervision requirement.

Other legislative issues of note to monitor include the continuing movement toward an alternative route for licensure of Chemical Dependency Professionals for master's-level clinicians. At present, master's-level clinicians would be required to complete 15 quarter-credit hours of post-graduate coursework to meet the training requirement, instead of 45 quarter credits at the associate level. However, a potential barrier for LMHCs is the proposed language that licensed counselors also complete their residency hours in an agency under the supervision of a CDP (who may have only completed education at the associate-level).

In addition, we are hoping to hear news within the next few months that the Department of Social and Human Services will be approving modified language pertaining to the Mental Health Professional designation. Ellen Carruth, WMHCA President Emeritus, has been spearheading

the campaign to change this language so that counseling students (along with marriage and family therapy students) are credentialed as MHPs once they complete their graduate programs and obtain their associate license as mental health counselors (LMHCA) or marriage and family therapists (LMFTA). Currently, counseling and marriage and family students must obtain two years of post-graduate experience to obtain the MHP credential while social workers receive this after completing their program of study (i.e., do not wait for two years). The MHP credential is important, since Medicaid will only allow MHPs to diagnose mental disorders. This currently restricts the scope of practice and thus the hiring potential for our counseling graduates in Washington State.

As usual, we have several excellent workshops coming up on: Phobia Release; Suicide Assessment, Management, and Treatment (meeting WAC training requirements for health professionals), Building a Therapeutic Alliance with Information Markets (6 hours of ethics CEs), and Using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. We hope to see some of you there!

Lastly, we are still seeking Board Member applications for the coming year (2016-17). Please contact our Executive Assistant if you would like to complete an application to join our wonderful Board! Her email is [wmhcaboardassistant@gmail.com](mailto:wmhcaboardassistant@gmail.com)

Yours in the counseling profession,

Thom Field, PhD, LMHC, NCC, ACS