Professional Licensure Update

The Pennsylvania Counselor’s Association has an excellent web site providing the latest information on licensure of social workers, marriage and family therapists and professional counselors. The following information was taken from their web site at [http://academic.uofs.edu/organization/pca](http://academic.uofs.edu/organization/pca). Access the PCA web site or contact Rebecca May (rebecca@aprovers.org) at PCPA for more information.

**Grandparenting Applications for MFT's Available and Other Licensure News (Dec. 20, 2001)**

1. Application for License by Exemption to Practice Marriage and Family Therapy are being mailed to those who requested them and are now available for downloading on the web site of the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors (http://www.dos.state.pa.us/bpoa/socwkbd/mainpage.htm). Follow the link for "Licensure Information." You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download the application.

2. Applications for License by Exemption to Practice Professional Counseling (grandparenting applications) are not yet available. We don't have a date yet for release of those applications. We remain confident that applications will be released in time for applicants to meet the Feb. 19, 2002 deadline (see related article, Getting Ready for Grandparenting below). Professional counselors may also want to have a look at the MFT application to get a better idea of what might be requested on the counselor applications once they are issued.

3. We had previously been told by the Board that proof of practice will be verified by obtaining the signature of two licensed health care professionals (psychologist, social worker, physician, etc.). We can now report that verification can also be obtained from credentialed counselors and marriage and family therapists.

4. The final-form licensure regulation was resubmitted (see related article, Unexpected Delay to Result in Release of Licensure Applications, below) on December 18 to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly (the House Professional Licensure Committee and the Senate...
Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee) and to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). Each committee has until January 7, 2002 to act on the regulation. Failure to act by the deadline results in automatic approval by that committee.

5. IRRC has tentatively scheduled action on the proposed regulation for its January 10, 2002 meeting.

6. The Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee has tentatively scheduled consideration of HB 1813 (a bill to extend the grandparenting period for one year) for January 23, 2002. Favorable action by that committee could send HB 1813 to the floor of the Senate. Until HB 1813 is passed and signed into law, the closing date for grandparenting is Feb. 19, 2002.

**Unexpected Delay To Result in Release of Licensure Applications**

Due to an unexpected delay in the regulatory review process, the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors will begin to release applications prior to IRRC approval in order to allow time for applicants for licensure by grandparenting to meet the Feb. 19, 2002 deadline. The Board has also determined that although it prefers to have all supporting materials submitted with the application it will accept supporting material submitted beyond the deadline date so long as the application is received by the deadline. While there is no definite date set for release of applications it is expected to be accomplished soon.

The proposed final-form licensure regulation scheduled for action by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) at its December 20 meeting was withdrawn today due to a procedural error that occurred in the regulatory review process. Withdrawal of the regulation was not related to its merits. The Board will need to resubmit the regulation to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly and to IRRC. PACP does not know when the regulation will be submitted or when it might be reviewed by the Standing Committees and IRRC. While the Board will issue applications in time for applicants to meet the deadline, it will not begin to issue licenses for counselors and marriage and family therapists until the proposed licensure regulation is approved.

Although HB 1813, a bill to extend the grandparenting deadline, has passed the House, the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee has been unable to schedule action on the bill. That committee is, however, tentatively scheduled to meet on January 23, 2002. Until HB 1813 is passed and signed into law, the grandparenting deadline remains Feb. 19, 2002. PACP will continue to work for passage of HB 1813.

PACP recommends that anyone planning to apply for grandparenting take the steps listed in the article below (**Getting Ready for Grandparenting**).
Getting Ready For Grandparenting!
Do you plan to apply for grandparenting? Here's what you can do while waiting for your application.

1. Arrange to have official copies of your graduate transcripts sent to you in a sealed envelope. When you receive the transcripts, DO NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPE! Hold it and submit it when you send in your application for licensure. We have been assured that the Board will accept transcripts submitted in this way. Information on how to request official transcripts can be obtained from the registrar of your college or university.

2. Request that a letter verifying that you hold a national credential and that you have passed a national examination be sent to you in a sealed envelope. As with the transcripts, DO NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPE! Hold it and submit it when you send in your application for licensure. Again, we have been assured that the Board will accept verification submitted in this way. Information on obtaining verification is provided below.

3. We have been told by the Board that proof of practice will be verified by obtaining the signature of two licensed health care professionals (psychologist, social worker, physician, etc.). Although the forms for obtaining these signatures are expected to be a part of the grandparenting application, you can begin to identify and alert those persons whose signatures you will require.

4. If you require proof of continuing education to be eligible for grandparenting you should begin to collect that documentation now.

NCC's

You should NOT have to contact NBCC! If you are an NCC (or a CCMHC) living in Pennsylvania you should soon receive a letter from NBCC. Enclosed with that letter will be the required verification document in a sealed envelope for your submission with your licensure application. DO NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPE! THE BOARD MUST RECEIVE VERIFICATION IN A SEALED ENVELOPE. An unsealed copy of the verification will also be included for your records. Although NBCC typically requires a written request and fee of $10.00 before verifications are sent, they will be providing all NCC's (and CCMHC's) with this documentation now to assist in meeting the Feb. 19, 2002 deadline for grandparenting. You will be asked by NBCC to notify them if you use the official (sealed) verification for licensure. NBCC will bill for the $10.00 with your next annual maintenance fee billing.

For more information contact Pennsylvania Community Providers Association
2400 Park Drive • Harrisburg, PA  17110 • Phone 717/ 657-7078 • FAX 717/ 657-3552
www.paproviders.org • mail@paproviders.org

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CRC's

CRC's can arrange to have the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) verify their status and passing exam score. To facilitate verification of your scores, PACP has worked with CRCC to develop a form letter that can be used to request verification. We suggest you download and use this form letter:

When Must I Apply?

As of now, the deadline to submit an application for grandparenting is Feb. 19, 2002. Although there is a bill in the General Assembly to extend this date, and although we are hopeful that it will pass and be signed into law, we cannot guarantee that. Therefore, we urge all applicants for grandparenting to proceed as if the final deadline will be Feb. 19, 2002.

The Board has determined that supporting materials (transcripts, credential/exam verification) may be submitted later than the deadline so long as the application itself is submitted on time. We strongly suggest that to facilitate handling of your application you collect your supporting materials now so that you can submit them at the same time you submit your application.

Licensed in Another State But Now Living In Pennsylvania?

We anticipate problems with licensure by reciprocity, so if you are already licensed in another state, but living in PA, we strongly suggest you apply for licensure by grandparenting if you qualify to do so. In addition to the documentation required of all applicants, persons licensed in another state may be required to provide a letter attesting to their good standing in that state.

The information we are providing here is based on the best information we have at this time. While we believe it to be accurate, we cannot make any guarantees.

If you have not already done so, you should request an application from:

State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649
Phone - (717) 783-1389
Fax - (717) 787-7769
socialwo@pados.dos.state.pa.us

Please do not contact PCA for licensure applications.
House Professional Licensure Committee Approves Licensure Regulation

December 11, 2001, Harrisburg, PA: The House Professional Licensure Committee today approved the final-form licensure regulation submitted on November 27 by the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors. The Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee is not expected to meet before the Committee's December 17 deadline to act on the regulation. Approval is automatic in cases where the Committee does not meet before the deadline.

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) will take up the proposed regulation at a meeting scheduled for December 20 in Harrisburg. If IRRC approves the regulation it is sent to the State Attorney General's office for a final review for form and legality before the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Once published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, the regulation will have the force of law.

PACP anticipates that the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors will begin to mail applications once IRRC has approved the regulations.