

RODE WILT MEMBER
HARRISBURG OFFICE:
HOUSE POST OFFICE BOX 202020
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 783-5008
FAX: (717) 787-0860

DISTRICT OFFICES:
3 GREENVILLE PLAZA - WEST
HADLEY ROAD
GREENVILLE, PA 16125
PHONE: (724) 588-8911

16678 MCMATH AVENUE
MEADVILLE, PA 16335
PHONE: (814) 337-8132

Website www.rep.wilt.com
E-mail repwilt@repwilt.com



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

October 4, 2000

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Commissioner Dorothy Childress
Bureau of Professional and
Occupational Affairs
124 Pine Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Act 136 of 1998;
Licensure of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Counselors

Dear Commissioner Childress:

I have been contacted by a constituent who is a Master's level Certified Addiction Counselor. She has brought to my attention a significant omission in the proposed regulations of the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors, which will implement the licensure provisions of Act 136 of 1998. As you know, the proposed regulations set forth a list of professional credentialing organizations whose certifications will be recognized by the board for the purpose of licensure by "grandfathering." Unfortunately, missing from that list is the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselors (NAADAC), which is the national credentialing organization for drug and alcohol addiction counselors.

I am aware that Act 136 establishes licensure for Master's level professional counselors, and that the National Certified Addiction Counselor credential offered by NAADAC may be awarded to bachelor's level counselors. However, NAADAC also offers a Master Addiction Counselor (MAC) Certification, for which a Master's degree is a prerequisite. The requirements for this certification are no less rigorous than those of the other organizations which the board proposes to recognize. In addition to the requirement of a Master's Degree, a candidate for MAC certification must have 500 contact hours of specific alcoholism and drug abuse counseling, three years full-time or 6,000 hours of supervised experience, two years or 4,000 hours of which must be post master's degree award, and a passing score on the national examination for the MAC.

I believe that state licensure for drug and alcohol addiction counselors as important as it is for any other professional counseling fields. Individuals in need of addiction counseling should have the same right as any other mental health patients to be assured that their

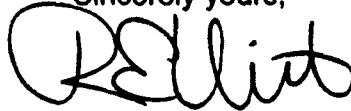
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professional counselors are competent and have met minimum education and experience standards. Additionally, state licensure of addiction counselors will provide eligibility for insurance reimbursement for their services, making such services more obtainable by the citizens of this Commonwealth. Accordingly, I would strongly urge the board to include the MAC certification of NAADAC in the list of certifications which will be recognized for the purpose of licensure by grandfathering.

Thank you for your cooperation and attention. I look forward to hearing from you on this issue at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rod E. Wilt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Rod E. Wilt
State Representative
17th Legislative District

REW:taj