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February 10, 2008

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

DEP SEC FOR QA&HP

c: Dutton
Kopelman

Calvin Johnson M.D., Secretary
PA Dept. of Health
8th Floor, West Health and Human Services Building
P.O. Box 90
Harrisburg, PA 17108

REFER TO

Atacy
Cooper

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BUREAU OF COMMUNITY PROGRAM
LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

Dear Secretary Johnson:

Thank you for your interest in what the recovery community and treatment professionals think about the proposed confidentiality changes. I represent both.

While I recognize and support the need to protect client's confidence I believe the laws are too stringent; especially when it comes to the treatment of men and women in the Criminal Justice System.

It is well documented that the longer the course of treatment, the greater likelihood of a successful outcome. Men and women in the criminal justice often incorrectly use confidentiality as a way to avoid on-going treatment and working on treatment issues.

To the Criminal Justice Systems credit they have begun to recognize the importance of treatment in rehabilitating offenders. However, the current confidentiality laws limit the amount of relevant information that providers can share with referral sources in the Criminal Justice System. This often leads to treatment being too short or handcuffs providers from fully using the leverage probation, parole and corrections can levy. It also interferes with D/A provider's ability to educate law enforcement and correction personnel on treatment and recovery issues that may be unique to a case. How can the correction system help correct behavior when they are overly limited as to the amount of information they can glean from treatment folks, who may have a very good handle on the needs of the offenders with whom they work.

I am in support of revising the current confidentiality laws in order to allow the Criminal Justice System and treatment system to work more openly and cooperatively in order to provide the most thorough course of treatment possible for men and women in the Criminal Justice System.

Sincerely:

William Bernardo

William Bernardo M.ED., CAC
RTI Program Director