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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

April 1, 2008

Meghan M. Thomsen
Senior Policy Manager
Governor's Office of Policy and Planning
Room 506, Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

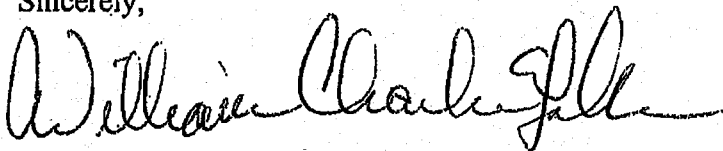
Dear Ms. Thomsen,

I am writing in support of your efforts to revise Pennsylvania regulations related to Drug and Alcohol confidentiality. I am a licensed clinical social worker and have worked in the Drug and Alcohol field for over 35 years. I have been an advocate for revision of PA 255.5 for many years. The regulations were published at a time when a great deal of stigma existed and there were significant fears that law enforcement would inappropriately request information for the purpose of incarcerating individuals who might be seeking treatment.

Our society has changed significantly. Celebrities, socially prominent individuals, and even elected officials have disclosed histories of substance abuse, involvement in recovery, and even announced entry into rehab. The stigma that existed in the past has been greatly minimized. With the marked growth of incarceration, the criminal justice system now has a marked investment in creating linkages with treatment to reduce rates of incarceration. Overly restrictive regulations create obstacles to sharing the information that is necessary to assure access to care while providing for community safety.

It is time to normalize treatment for substance related disorders. It is my belief that the proposed revision will allow for adequate exchange of information and will not harm anyone. In fact, it may be a step in the direction of reducing stigma and mainstreaming alcohol and drug treatment.

Sincerely,



William Charles Folks LCSW