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Janice Staloski, Director
Bureau of Community Program Licensure and Certification
Pennsylvania Department of Health
132 Kline Plaza, Suite A
Harrisburg, PA 17104-1579

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Janice Staloski:

I would like to express my concerns to the proposed changes to 4 PA Code Section 255.5, the state confidentiality regulations that presently protect the confidentiality information of patients and families seeking help for addiction to alcohol and other drugs. The confidentiality laws currently in place have provided sufficient protection to individuals and families for many years, by restricting health and law enforcement agencies from information that could be used against persons in need of addiction treatment services. The current code protects the patient's right to confidentiality and strengthens their ability to seek treatment services, without the fear of reprisal and disapproval of others. The proposed changes will diminish the intent of the law by expanding the amount of information treatment providers will be able to give to outside entities.

Individuals seeking treatment for their addiction have a fundamental right to privacy and it is imperative that they have the ability to maintain that privacy throughout their treatment experience. The current confidentiality law aids a person seeking treatment to move forward in their recovery process with assurance that any information provided to others will not be used to discriminate or hinder their rehabilitation process in any way.

We believe the proposed changes will discourage persons seeking recovery from being completely honest about who they are and what has happened to them in their past. This information is vital to the recovery process and most sacred to those in recovery. As a registered voter and recovering person, it is my hope that the proposed changes will not be accepted and the present confidentiality regulations remain in fact.

Additional Comments:

That info is confidential, can we keep it that way.

Sincerely,

Rita White