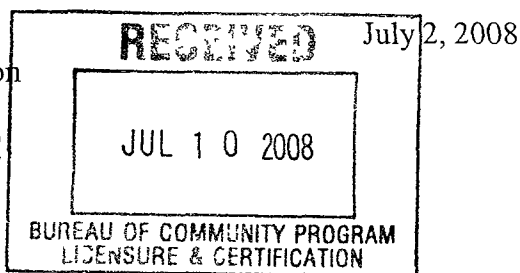


Janice Staloski, Director
Bureau of Community Program Licensure & Certification
Department of Health
132 Kline Plaza, Suite A
Harrisburg, PA 17104
Fax: 717-787-3188

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION



Dear Ms. Staloski,

#2654.

Please record that the undersigned Social Workers are opposed to the Department of Health's Proposed Regulation No. 10-186 regarding confidentiality of drug and alcohol patient records.

The proposed changes will substantially weaken vitally important drug and alcohol confidentiality regulations that currently protect vulnerable people and their embarrassed families seeking help with drug and alcohol problems.

Alcohol and other drug addiction is a highly stigmatized disease. As social workers who work every day directly with chemically dependent people and their families, we are extremely concerned about the confidentiality of the information that is shared within the sanctity of the client/counselor relationship.

We note that numerous individuals and organizations representing people in recovery from this illness have written to the Department of Health to oppose the proposed regulation. The statewide Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance and the local recovery groups have joined over 140 groups, individuals and elected officials to express opposition.

The proposed changes will result in persons being asked unnecessary and highly personal questions about things such as historic trauma and detailed family history information that are not needed to approve funding under current placement criteria, regulations and laws. Forcing people to reveal such deeply personal information is inconsistent with the value we place on the dignity and worth of the individuals and families served.

Surely in this debate over privacy of personal information, the opinions of families afflicted with the illness must be honored, respected and given primacy over managed care and insurance companies.

We proudly add our names to those who are opposed to the proposed weakening of state confidentiality protections of drug and alcohol records.

We urge the Department to withdraw them.

Thank you,

Rachael L. Simmons, MSW, LSW

cc: Scott Schalles, Independent Regulatory Review Commission
Fax: 717-283-2664

Social Worker Opposed to Department of Health's Proposed Regulation No. 10-186 that would weaken confidentiality of drug and alcohol addiction treatment patient records:

Name Rachael L. Simmons Credentials MSW, LSW
Street Address 801 Pershing Blvd.
City Nemacolin, PA 15351
Signature Rachael L. Simmons, MSW, LSW