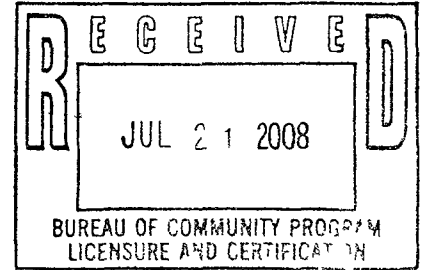




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July 16, 2008
Janice Staloski, Director
Bureau of Community Program Licensure and Certification
Department of Health
132 Kline Plaza, Suite A,
Harrisburg, PA 17104-1579

Dear Ms. Staloski,

The purpose of this letter is to express **support of the proposed regulation amendment of the client confidentiality provisions** for clients who are receiving drug and alcohol services. Lenape Valley Foundation is an agency providing MH, MR, EI and co-occurring services.

We have advocated for change in 255.5(b) for over a decade. The current regulations are outdated, unnecessary and impede the coordination of care. The 255.5(b) regulations make it difficult to get appropriate approvals/authorizations from insurance companies and managed care organizations for higher levels of care, continued care, and appropriate medications.

The increase in and development of co-occurring treatment has made this problem even more apparent. In some cases clients can not get authorization for needed medication due to the restrictions of 255.5. Also, individuals in the drug and alcohol service system often need help navigating other systems and applying for much needed benefits. The problems with 255.5(b) make it difficult to work with other important partners in the individuals' recovery process such as the child welfare system, the Social Security Administration, and the criminal justice system.

Providers have been put between a rock and a hard place – either share what needs to be shared (with the client's consent) to get the needed services approved and risk citation by licensing or not share the information and have services denied. Fortunately, most PCPA members have chosen to get the client the services they need and lived in fear of citations.

Numerous task forces and work groups have met over the last ten years to discuss the problems. We are hopeful that the long overdue changes can finally be made to the confidentiality regulations in Pennsylvania in order to improve access to much needed drug and alcohol services.

Sincerely,

Philip R. Braun, Ph.D.
Associate Executive Director for Rehabilitative Services