

California Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act:
ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS LICENSURE BILL

Fact Sheet

SUMMARY

This bill would establish a license and a career ladder for alcohol and drug (AOD) counselors for the purpose of expanding access to substance use disorder treatment services.

The bill would make licensed AOD counselors Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts (LPHA) for waiver provisions. To achieve this, the bill would require an advance certification and Master’s degree for licensure candidates. Additionally, requires 12,000 hours of experience and a passing score on a Master’s level test to grandparent eligible candidates. This bill would also establish a career ladder to capture experience and other requirements to count toward licensure.

In addition, this bill transfers oversight of substance use disorder counselors and certifying organizations from the Department of Health Care Services to the Alcohol and Drug Counseling Professional Bureau. The bill also limits reviews of certifying organizations by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to once a year.

BACKGROUND

There are an estimated 3.5 million persons with a diagnosable substance use disorders in California. However, there are a little over 20,000 AOD abuse counselors of an unknown competency level currently certified by private credentialing bodies in California. California currently employs fewer AOD counselors per population than the national average.

In 2016, there were 2,012 opioid-related overdose deaths in California, a rate of 4.9 deaths per 100,000 persons. The need for qualified, competent substance disorder treatment professionals is immense and will continue to rise throughout the next decade.

This bill will establish a license and a career ladder for alcohol and drug counselors. Establishing an AOD counselor license will develop a competent addiction workforce, for the private and public sectors, and will allow the profession to meet the demand for addiction related treatment in California

by expanding the numbers of competent AOD counselors. The creation of a professional license will allow for the detention of opioid use disorder in its earliest stages in public and private practice settings; something currently lacking in private practice since AOD private practice is not regulated in California. Establishing an AOD professional license will also further assist the state in the successful implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

None

THIS BILL

Specifically, this bill:

- Establishes a license and a career ladder for AOD counselors
- Establishes AOD license program within the Alcohol and Drug Counseling Professional Bureau
- Provides AOD license application and education requirements
- Defines AOD license fees
- Defines AOD licensure scope of practice

STATUS

Seeking author(s)

SUPPORT

OPPOSITION

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Louie Brown
Kahn Soares and Conway