

**CHAPTER 376b**  
**ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELORS**

**Section 20-74s. Licensure and certification of alcohol and drug counselors. (a) Definitions.** For purposes of this section and subdivision (18) of subsection (c) of section 19a-14:

(a) For purposes of this section and subdivision (18) of subsection (c) of section 19a-14:

(1) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Public Health;

(2) "Licensed alcohol and drug counselor" means a person licensed under the provisions of this section;

(3) "Certified alcohol and drug counselor" means a person certified under the provisions of this section;

(4) "Practice of alcohol and drug counseling" means the professional application of methods that assist an individual or group to develop an understanding of alcohol and drug dependency problems, define goals, and plan action reflecting the individual's or group's interest, abilities and needs as affected by alcohol and drug dependency problems, and may include, as appropriate, (A) conducting a substance use disorder screening or psychosocial history evaluation of an individual to document the individual's use of drugs prescribed for pain, other prescribed drugs, illegal drugs and alcohol to determine the individual's risk for substance abuse, (B) developing a preliminary diagnosis for the individual based on such screening or evaluation, (C) determining the individual's risk for abuse of drugs prescribed for pain, other prescribed drugs, illegal drugs and alcohol, (D) developing a treatment plan and referral options for the individual to ensure the individual's recovery support needs are met, and (E) developing and submitting an opioid use consultation report to an individual's primary care provider to be reviewed by the primary care provider and included in the individual's medical record;

(5) "Private practice of alcohol and drug counseling" means the independent practice of alcohol and drug counseling by a licensed or certified alcohol and drug counselor who is self-employed on a full-time or part-time basis and who is responsible for that independent practice;

(6) "Self-help group" means a voluntary group of persons who offer peer support to each other in recovering from an addiction; and

(7) "Supervision" means the regular on-site observation of the functions and activities of an alcohol and drug counselor in the performance of his or her duties and responsibilities to include a review of the records, reports, treatment plans or recommendations with respect to an individual or group.

(b) Except as provided in subsections (s) to (x), inclusive, of this section, no person shall engage in the practice of alcohol and drug counseling unless licensed as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor pursuant to subsection (d) of this section or certified as a certified alcohol and drug counselor pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

(c) Except as provided in subsections (s) to (x), inclusive, of this section, no person shall engage in the private practice of alcohol and drug counseling unless (1) licensed as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, or (2) certified as a certified alcohol and drug counselor pursuant to subsection (e) of this section and practicing under the supervision of a licensed alcohol and drug counselor.

(d) To be eligible for licensure as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, an applicant shall (1) have attained a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in social work, marriage and family therapy, counseling, psychology or a related field approved by the commissioner that included a minimum of eighteen graduate semester hours in counseling or counseling-related subjects, except applicants holding certified clinical supervisor status by the Connecticut Certification Board, Inc. as of October 1, 1998, may substitute such certification in lieu of the master's degree requirement, and (2) have completed the certification eligibility requirements in subsection (e) of this section.

(e) To be eligible for certification by the Department of Public Health as a certified alcohol and drug counselor, an applicant shall have (1) completed three hundred hours of supervised practical training in alcohol and drug counseling that the commissioner deems acceptable; (2) completed three years of supervised paid work experience or unpaid internship that the commissioner deems acceptable that entailed working directly with alcohol and drug clients, except that a master's degree may be substituted for one year of such experience; (3) completed three hundred sixty hours of commissioner-approved education, at least two hundred forty hours of which relates to the knowledge and skill base associated with the practice of alcohol and drug counseling; and (4) successfully completed a department prescribed examination.

(f) For individuals applying for certification as an alcohol and drug counselor by the Department of Public Health prior to October 1, 1998, current certification by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services may be substituted for the certification requirements of subsection (e) of this section.

(g) The commissioner shall grant a license as an alcohol and drug counselor to any applicant who furnishes satisfactory evidence that he has met the requirements of subsection (d) or (e) of this section. The commissioner shall develop and provide application forms. The application fee shall be one hundred ninety dollars.

(h) A license as an alcohol and drug counselor shall be renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 19a-88 for a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(i) The commissioner shall grant certification as a certified alcohol and drug counselor to any applicant who furnishes satisfactory evidence that he has met the requirements of subsection (e) or (o) of this section. The commissioner shall develop and provide application forms. The application fee shall be one hundred ninety dollars.

(j) A certificate as an alcohol and drug counselor may be renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 19a-88 for a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(k) The commissioner may contract with a qualified private organization for services that include (1) providing verification that applicants for licensure or certification have met the education, training and work experience requirements under this section; and (2) any other services that the commissioner may deem necessary.

(l) Any person who has attained a master's level degree and is certified by the Connecticut Certification Board as a substance abuse counselor on or before July 1, 2000, shall be deemed a licensed alcohol and drug counselor. Any person so deemed shall renew his license pursuant to section 19a-88 for a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(m) Any person who has not attained a master's level degree and is certified by the Connecticut Certification Board as a substance abuse counselor on or before July 1, 2000, shall be deemed a certified alcohol and drug counselor. Any person so deemed shall renew his certification pursuant to section 19a-88 for a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(n) Any person who is not certified by the Connecticut Certification Board as a substance abuse counselor on or before July 1, 2000, who (1) documents to the department that he has a minimum of five years full-time or eight years part-time paid work experience, under supervision, as an alcohol and drug counselor, and (2) successfully passes a commissioner-approved examination no later than July 1, 2000, shall be deemed a certified alcohol and drug counselor. Any person so deemed shall renew his certification pursuant to section 19a-88 for a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(o) The commissioner may license or certify without examination any applicant who, at the time of application, is licensed or certified by a governmental agency or private organization located in another state, territory or jurisdiction whose standards, in the opinion of the commissioner, are substantially similar to, or higher than, those of this state.

(p) No person shall assume, represent himself as, or use the title or designation "alcoholism counselor", "alcohol counselor", "alcohol and drug counselor", "alcoholism and drug counselor", "licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor", "licensed alcohol and drug counselor", "licensed associate alcohol and drug counselor", "certified alcohol and drug counselor", "chemical dependency counselor", "chemical dependency supervisor" or any of the abbreviations for such titles, unless licensed or certified under subsections (g) to (n), inclusive, of this section and unless the title or designation corresponds to the license or certification held.

(q) The commissioner shall adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, to implement provisions of this section.

(r) The commissioner may suspend, revoke or refuse to issue a license in circumstances that have endangered or are likely to endanger the health, welfare or safety of the public.

(s) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to the activities and services of a rabbi, priest, minister, Christian Science practitioner or clergyman of any religious denomination or sect, when engaging in activities that are within the scope of the performance of the person's regular or specialized ministerial duties and for which no separate charge is made, or when these activities are performed, with or without charge, for or under the auspices or sponsorship, individually or in conjunction with others, of an established and legally cognizable church, denomination or sect, and when the person rendering services remains accountable to the established authority thereof.

(t) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to the activities and services of a person licensed in this state to practice medicine and surgery, psychology, marital and family therapy, clinical social work, professional counseling, advanced practice registered nursing or registered nursing, when such person is acting within the scope of the person's license and doing work of a nature consistent with that person's license, provided the person does not hold himself or herself out to the public as possessing a license or certification issued pursuant to this section.

(u) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to the activities and services of a student intern or trainee in alcohol and drug counseling who is pursuing a course of study in an accredited institution of higher education or training course, provided these activities are performed under supervision and constitute a part of an accredited course of study, and provided further the person is designated as an intern or trainee or other such title indicating the training status appropriate to his level of training.

(v) Nothing in this section shall apply to individuals who are on October 1, 2010, employed by a state agency as a rehabilitation counselor who is acting in the capacity of an alcohol and drug counselor.

(w) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to the activities and services of paid alcohol and drug counselors who are working under supervision or uncompensated alcohol and drug abuse self-help groups, including, but not limited to, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

(x) The provisions of this section shall apply to employees of the Department of Correction, other than trainees or student interns covered under subsection (u) of this section and persons completing supervised paid work experience in order to satisfy mandated clinical supervision requirements for certification under subsection (e) of this section, as follows: (1) Any person hired by the Department of Correction on or after October 1, 2002, for a position as a substance abuse counselor or supervisor of substance abuse counselors shall be a licensed or certified alcohol and drug counselor; (2) any person employed by the Department of Correction prior to October 1, 2002, as a substance abuse counselor or supervisor of substance abuse counselors shall become licensed or certified as an alcohol and drug counselor by October 1, 2007; and (3) any person employed by the Department of Correction on or after October 1, 2007, as a substance abuse counselor or supervisor of substance abuse counselors shall be a licensed or certified alcohol and drug counselor.

(y) On and after the effective date of this section, no initial license to engage in the practice of alcohol and drug counseling shall be issued unless the applicant meets the requirements of this section to practice

alcohol and drug counseling. The foregoing provision shall not apply to alcohol and drug counselors licensed in this state on or after June 15, 2012, and prior to the effective date of this section.

(z) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit or limit the ability of a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, who in the practice of alcohol and drug counseling, provides counseling services to an individual diagnosed with a co-occurring mental health condition other than alcohol and drug dependency, provided such counseling services are within the scope of practice of a licensed alcohol and drug counselor as described in this section.

**Section 20-74t. Continuing Education Requirement.** (a) On and after October 1, 2004, each alcohol and drug counselor licensed or certified pursuant to this chapter shall complete a minimum of twenty hours of continuing education each registration period. For purposes of this section, registration period means the twelve-month period for which a license or certificate has been renewed in accordance with section 19a-88 and is current and valid. The continuing education shall be in areas related to the individual's practice and shall include not less than one contact hour of training or education each registration period on the topic of cultural competency and, on and after January 1, 2016, not less than two contact hours of training or education during the first renewal period in which continuing education is required and not less than once every six years thereafter on the topic of mental health conditions common to veterans and family members of veterans, including (1) determining whether a patient is a veteran or family member of a veteran, (2) screening for conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, risk of suicide, depression and grief, and (3) suicide prevention training. Qualifying continuing education activities are educational offerings sponsored by a hospital or other licensed health care institutions, courses offered by a regionally accredited institution of higher education or courses offered by individuals or organizations on the list maintained by the Connecticut Certification Board, Inc. as approved providers of such continuing education activities.

(b) Each licensee or certificate holder shall obtain a certificate of completion from the provider of continuing education activities for all continuing education hours successfully completed. Each licensee or certificate holder shall maintain such written documentation for a minimum of three years following the license or certificate renewal date for which the activity satisfies continuing education requirements. Certificates of completion shall be submitted by the licensee or certificate holder to the Department of Public Health upon the department's request. A licensee or certificate holder who fails to comply with the continuing education requirements shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to subsection (r) of section 20-74s or section 19a-17 of the general statutes.

(c) The continuing education requirements shall be waived for licensees and certificate holders applying for licensure or certification renewal for the first time. The department may, for a licensee or certificate holder who has a medical disability or illness, grant a waiver of the continuing education requirements for a specific period of time or may grant the licensee or certificate holder an extension of time in which to fulfill the requirements.