



June 8, 2015

Dear Florence,

As Presidents of the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) and the American Counseling Association (ACA), we are writing you to request that the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling adopt the consensus licensure title and scope of practice approved by the profession of counseling through the Building Blocks to Portability Project of *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling*.

Background

20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling has been an ongoing and systematic collaboration of 31 organizations representing the profession of counseling. Cosponsored since 2006 by AASCB and ACA, 20/20 represents the maturation of a profession that is acting collectively and proactively to engage in long-term strategic planning. In a sense, 20/20 has been the United Nations of professional counseling. For a thorough discussion of the development of 20/20, please review the *Journal of Counseling & Development* article “A Vision for the Future of Counseling: The 20/20 Principles for Unifying and Strengthening the Profession” by clicking:

www.counseling.org/docs/licensure/principles-for-unifying-and-strengthening-the-profession.pdf?sfvrsn=0

and visiting the 20/20 website:

www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/20-20-a-vision-for-the-future-of-counseling

The Building Blocks to Portability Project

The decision to work on the Building Blocks to Portability Project grew out of the need for a profession-wide initiative to address one of the most troublesome problems for practicing professional counselors—the lack of licensure portability. ACA receives about 12 calls each week from experienced professional counselors who are licensed in their home state, need to move to another state, and are unable to obtain a license in their new home jurisdiction.

The 31 counseling organizations participating in *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling* recognized that the lack of licensure portability is as much a crisis for the public as for professional counselors. Dr. David Kaplan spoke in his role as the 20/20 administrative coordinator before state counseling boards at the AASCB conference in 2012. Dr. Kaplan pointed out that there are currently over 45 titles used by state counseling boards, that no two scopes of practice are the same, that the number of graduate credits required range from an unstated amount to 60 credits with stops along the way at 42 and 48 credits, and that the number of postgraduate supervision hours range from 500 to 4,500. He made the case that this confusing stew of titles, scopes of practice, and education requirements confuses the public. Dr. Kaplan also stated that facilitating licensure portability is a public protection issue for three distinct reasons: It will help address the documented dire shortage of counselors in rural areas, it will help licensing boards to better meet the needs of underserved populations, and it would help to standardize professional counseling for the 7.6 million people who move to a different state each year. To read the complete AASCB speech about the need for state counseling boards to address portability, please click on the following link: <http://ct.counseling.org/2012/01/licensure-reciprocity-a-critical-public-protection-issue-that-needs-action/>

Based on the lack of consistent state requirements as described previously, the delegates to the *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling* designed the 20/20 Building Blocks to Portability Project to facilitate licensure portability and continue the advancement of a uniform and consistent identity for the counseling profession by focusing on three tasks:

- The development of a consensus licensure **title** to recommend to all state licensing boards
- The development of a consensus **scope of practice** to recommend to all state licensing boards
- The development of consensus **education requirements** to recommend to all state licensing boards

The delegates used a modified Delphi procedure as the basic methodology to assist them with the Building Blocks to Portability Project. A Delphi is a research methodology that is used to help a number of individuals with different perspectives and thoughts on an issue come to a reasoned and solid decision.

The delegates divided into three work groups, which represented the three building blocks to portability: title, scope of practice, and education requirements. First, each group developed a list of possibilities. Then, they used data to assist them in exploring the initial options. For example, the scope of practice work group asked for a content analysis of all 52 scopes of practice in the United States. Each work group then evaluated and rated all the possibilities within their building block, identifying those concepts that floated to the top.

The delegates were able to use the Delphi method to come to consensus on a licensure title and scope of practice. Despite their best efforts, the delegates were not able to agree on a set of consensus education requirements for counselor licensure that would be endorsed by the profession of counseling. So this particular task is left for another day and another initiative.

The consensus title and scope of practice agreed to by the delegates were then circulated to the 31 counseling organizations participating in 20/20 with a request for endorsement. It was extremely gratifying that **96% of the organizations voting endorsed both the licensure title and the scope of practice**. Thus, we can now say that we have one licensure title and one scope of practice endorsed by the profession of counseling:

Licensure Title: Licensed Professional Counselor

Licensure Scope of Practice:

The independent practice of counseling encompasses the provision of professional counseling services to individuals, groups, families, couples, and organizations through the application of accepted and established mental health counseling principles, methods, procedures, and ethics.

Counseling promotes mental health wellness, which includes the achievement of social, career, and emotional development across the life span, as well as prevents and treats mental disorders and provides crisis intervention.

Counseling includes, but is not limited to, psychotherapy, diagnosis, and evaluation; administration of assessments, tests, and appraisals; referral; and the establishment of counseling plans for the treatment of individuals, couples, groups, and families with emotional, mental, addiction, and physical disorders.

Counseling encompasses consultation and program evaluation; program administration within and to schools and organizations; and training and supervision of interns, trainees, and prelicensed professional counselors through accepted and established principles, methods, procedures, and ethics of counselor supervision.

The practice of counseling does not include functions or practices that are not within the professional's training or education.

Request for Adoption

On behalf of the counseling profession through *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling*, we request that your licensing board adopt the licensure title *Licensed Professional Counselor* and the licensure scope of practice as stated previously. We believe that this is a win-win situation for everyone; it will benefit professional counselors by helping to resolve the portability crisis in the United States, and it is in the best interest of the public because it will help address counselor shortages in rural areas, will allow a better


migration of counselors who can meet the needs of underserved populations, and will help citizens to have a better understanding of professional counselors.

Correspondence

Correspondence regarding this request should be sent to the 20/20 Administrative Coordinator, Dr. David Kaplan, at dkaplan@counseling.org. If a telephone conversation would be helpful at any time, please call Dr. Kaplan at 800-347-6647, ext. 397. Please do not hesitate to request any needed clarification or additional information.

In closing, this is a historic moment for the profession of counseling. The 20/20 process has spanned over 7 years, has consumed countless hours and efforts of voluntary service by an unbelievably dedicated cohort of delegates and leaders from over 30 counseling organizations, and culminates now with this request. We are honored to have been a part of this process.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Hammonds-White, President
American Association of State Counseling Boards



Dr. Robert L. Smith, President
American Counseling Association

Organizations Endorsing the 20/20 Licensure Title, Licensed Professional Counselor:

- *American Association of State Counseling Boards*
- *American College Counseling Association*
- *American Counseling Association*
- *ACA Midwest Region*
- *ACA North Atlantic Region*
- *ACA Southern Region*
- *ACA Western Region*
- *American Rehabilitation Counseling Association*
- *Association for Adult Development and Aging*
- *Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling*
- *Association for Counselor Education and Supervision*
- *Association for Counselors and Educators in Government*
- *Association for Creativity in Counseling*
- *Association for Humanistic Counseling*
- *Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling*
- *Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development*
- *Association for Specialists in Group Work*
- *Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling*
- *Chi Sigma Iota*
- *Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification*
- *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs*
- *Council on Rehabilitation Education*
- *Counselors for Social Justice*
- *International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors*
- *International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors*
- *National Board for Certified Counselors*
- *National Career Development Association*
- *National Rehabilitation Counseling Association*

Organizations Endorsing the 20/20 Scope of Practice:

- *American Association of State Counseling Boards*
- *American College Counseling Association*
- *American Counseling Association*
- *ACA Midwest Region*
- *ACA North Atlantic Region*
- *ACA Southern Region*
- *ACA Western Region*
- *American Mental Health Counselors Association*
- *American Rehabilitation Counseling Association*
- *Association for Adult Development and Aging*
- *Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling*
- *Association for Counselor Education and Supervision*
- *Association for Counselors and Educators in Government*
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