

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 291 (Delegates Guzzone and Cullison)
Health and Government Operations

Finance

**Health Occupations - Clinical and Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors -
Licensure**

This bill alters the qualifications to become licensed to practice as a clinical alcohol and drug counselor (LCADC) and to qualify to practice as a licensed graduate alcohol and drug counselor (LGADC) under supervision by specifying that the required master’s or doctoral degree must be in *professional* (rather than health and human services) counseling field from an accredited (rather than a *regionally* accredited) educational institution as approved by the State Board of Professional Counselors. The bill also repeals a second educational pathway for licensure as an LCADC and removes from statute specific coursework requirements to qualify for licensure as an LGADC.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The change is procedural in nature and does not directly affect governmental finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law:

Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselors

Under current law, an applicant for licensure as an LCADC must be at least age 18, of good moral character, and either (1) hold a master’s or doctoral degree in a *health and human*

services counseling field from a *regionally* accredited education institution that is approved by the board or (2) hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited educational institution and have completed a program of studies judged by the board to be substantially equivalent in subject matter as may be required by the board in regulation.

The bill (1) alters the first educational pathway to specify that an applicant may hold a master's or doctoral degree in a *professional* counseling field from an accredited educational institution (as opposed to a regionally accredited institution) that is approved by the board and (2) repeals the second educational pathway of a regionally accredited program approved by the board as substantially equivalent in subject matter.

Under current law, an applicant must also (1) complete any additional educational requirements established by the board in regulation; (2) complete and provide documentation of completing at least two years and 2,000 hours of supervised experience in alcohol and drug counseling following the award of the master's or doctoral degree; and (3) pass a board-approved examination and the law examination administered by the board. The bill does not alter these licensure requirements.

Licensed Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors

Under current law, to qualify to practice as an LGADC an individual must be at least age 18, of good moral character, and have a master's or doctoral degree in a *health and human services* counseling field from a *regionally* accredited educational institution.

The bill alters the above educational requirement to specify that an individual may hold a master's or doctoral degree in a *professional* counseling field from an accredited educational institution (as opposed to a regionally accredited institution) and further specifies that the educational institution meet the same educational requirements as those for an LCADC.

Under current law, an individual must also meet specific coursework requirements to practice as an LGADC: a minimum of 27 semester credit hours or 41 quarter credit hours in alcohol and drug counselor training including (1) 3 semester credit hours or 5 quarter credit hours in each of 6 specified courses and (2) 3 semester credit hours or 5 quarter credit hours in any 3 of 5 specified courses. The bill removes these specific educational requirements from statute.

However, Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.58.07.04 establishes coursework requirements to qualify for licensure as an LGADC that align with what is being removed from statute, specifically, a requirement for a minimum of 39 semester credit hours or 56 quarter credit hours in alcohol and drug counselor training including (1) 3 semester credit hours or 5 quarter credit hours in each of 6 specified courses and (2) 3 semester credit

hours or 5 quarter credit hours in any 3 of 5 specified courses. Furthermore, the coursework requirements under COMAR for an LGADC are identical to those established under COMAR 10.58.07.05 for an LCADC.

Under current law, an individual may not practice as an LGADC without board approval and before practicing as an LGADC must pass both (1) a board-approved examination and (2) the law examination administered by the board. The bill does not alter these requirements.

Additional Comments: The board advises that the revisions in the bill make the credentialing process for LCADC's and LGADC's more consistent with the requirements for similar professions that the board regulates.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 14 (Senator Augustine) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 25, 2023
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Analysis by: Amber R. Gundlach

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510