



**House Bill 291 - Health Occupations - Clinical and Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors -
Licensure**

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 16, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Evolve Life Centers program provides a wide range of clinically intensive treatment services, including, Partial Hospitalization, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient, Mental Health, Medium Intensity Residential Treatment, Low Intensity Residential Treatment, Recovery Housing and DUI Education through our 12 plus locations throughout Pasadena and the surrounding area in Anne Arundel County, MD.

HB 291 will alter 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.

In order to ease the workforce crisis in behavioral healthcare, HB 291 will reasonably adjust requirements for LCADCs and LGADCs without adversely affecting quality standards for licensing. At present, the requirements to become a LCADC are less than those for the other clinical counseling professions regulated by the Board despite the fact that LCADCs hold the same scope of practice. Therefore, standardizing requirements for professions regulated by the Board will ensure adequate training while also helping to alleviate confusion in the counseling field and for applicants as to the requirements for licensure as an LCADC. Also, by removing the language, "regional", for the kind of accredited institution which would qualify a LCADC or LGADC to practice, we are allowing for professional, well-trained and educated individuals to enter the workforce. Specifically, a workforce with immediate need in the State of Maryland.

Evolve Life Centers has high standards in regard to their quality of care and the safety of their guests. We are confident in the accredited institutions in the State that are producing professionals in the counseling field and believe these changes will make a positive impact on the community without jeopardizing standards for good quality of care.

For these reasons, Evolve Life Centers politely asks for a favorable report on HB 291.

For more information call or email:

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