



For Immediate Release

Salt Lake City – The Utah State Legislature passed Senate Bill 26, the Behavioral Health Workforce Amendments bill, on February 28. Among other things, the bill creates the Masters in Addiction Counseling license making Utah the 32<sup>nd</sup> state to create such a license. The Association Utah of Substance Abuse Professionals (AUSAP) board worked on this initiative for two years prior to its passage.

The MAC license in Utah is equivalent to the existing master’s level behavioral health licenses, such as the Licensed Clinical Social Worker, the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and the Clinical Mental Health Counselor. Qualifications for the license include a Masters in Addiction Counseling Degree or a Masters in another clinical discipline (psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, clinical mental health counseling) with additional course hours specific to addictions. Applicants will be required to pass either the Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC) exam through the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) or the NAADAC Master Addiction Counselor (MAC) exam through NCC AP. AUSAP is an affiliate of both IC&RC and NAADAC. Scope of practice includes diagnosing SUD and MH disorders, clinical supervision, and therapy.

The increase in licensed therapists resulting from this bill should help alleviate the shortage of therapists in the state and improve the safety and quality of care for Utah’s with SUDs and co-occurring diagnoses. The MAC license proposal was part of a larger behavioral health workforce omnibus bill that included prescribing of SSRI anti-depressants, the creation of a bachelor’s level extender certification, and improved clinical supervision requirements.

Once Utah Governor Spencer Cox signs the bill into law and the State’s Division of Occupational Licensure creates administrative rules, eligible applicants can begin applying for the license. It is estimated that there are already 25 practitioners in the state who would be immediately eligible for this license based on education but who are presently licensed at a lower level with a more restricted scope of practice.

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