

The Addiction Counsellor Initiative is a year 2 priority initiative of *Creating Connections: Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health Strategy*, under Strategic direction 5.0 Enhance Assurance (Creating Connection Strategy, September, 2011) and began September 2014 and will be completed March 2016. This initiative complements work underway with the *Addiction and Mental Health Professional Development Strategy, 2014-17*, focusing on improving availability of addiction specific training for health care providers and increasing practice supports to addiction counsellors.

## Purpose

The purpose of this initiative is to develop and implement a plan to ensure that addiction counsellors working for and funded by AHS meet the requirements of the role including educational qualifications and competencies thus contributing to improved patient care and public assurance.

## Goal

To support the competency development of the AHS addiction counselling workforce responsible for delivering safe quality addiction services to Albertans by developing a consistent approach to competency informed recruitment and staff development.

The objectives of the initiative are to:

1. To improve understanding of the Addiction Counsellor role and minimum education and experience for hiring to AHS based on a competency model.
2. To establish organizational guidance related to restricted and unrestricted activity required by the addiction counselling role in the various addiction program types.
3. To establish organizational guidance related to assessing qualifications of regulated or unregulated candidates during the recruitment process to ensure a competency based approach is used.
4. To clarify resources available to address competency requirements and development - i.e. those external to AHS in educational preparation and continuing education; and those internal to AHS.

## Outcome / Evaluation

The initiative will report on the completion of deliverables as evidence of support to the addiction counselling workforce in their role and competency development:

- Documented role statement and generic provincial position description
- AHS Guidance Statement regarding restricted activity in addiction counselling
- Competency profile for unregulated addiction counsellor
- AHS Guidance Statement regarding support for competency development for addiction counsellor role.

## Progress / Highlights

- ✓ Telehealth Session for Managers on Psychosocial Intervention: Restricted Activity - October 2014
- ✓ Draft Role Statement completed - November 2014
- ✓ Formation of Provincial Addiction Counselling Practice Council (PACPC), March 2015

## Next Steps (Next Quarter)

- PACPC work groups validate restricted activity and counsellor competencies, May – September 2015
- Draft and validate guidance statement regarding restricted activity in addiction counselling - September 2015
- Establish process to report on unregulated addiction counsellors doing restricted activity (if necessary)