



CRCC Connections

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IN THIS ISSUE

Continuing Education
Tools 3

Category R University
Programs 4

CRCC Desk Reference 5

CRCC Research News 5

Advocacy Update 6

CRC Exam Schedule 7

CRCC Commissioners 7

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From the Chair ...

Health Care Reform: Where It Stands Today and How it Affects CRCs

By **Christine Reid, Ph.D., CRC**

It was just a year ago, in March 2010, when Congress and the President enacted Health Care Reform legislation, specifically the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. Since that time, there has been much activity, at both federal and state levels.

On the federal level, the division within Congress was recently magnified as the House of Representatives voted in January to repeal Health Care Reform law while the Senate, just 2 weeks later in early February, voted to maintain the legislation. On the state level, over half of the states have challenged the constitutionality of Health Care Reform, focusing on the provision that requires all Americans at least 18 years of age to purchase health care insurance or pay a fine via a federal tax. To date, six different federal district courts have ruled with mixed outcomes: four courts have upheld the full law by granting Motions to Dismiss, one has overturned just the individual mandate provision, and one has struck down the entire law.

While these issues continue to unfold, both state legislatures and regulatory agencies are moving forward in determining how they will meet PPACA deadlines to implement a variety of health care reform provisions, including reforms to their state Medicaid programs and an overhaul of their state and individual insurance markets. By the end of 2012, states must determine whether or not they will be ready to establish a state exchange for health insurance, where individuals and small employers can purchase health plans at different benefit levels. States have three options: 1) set up their own exchanges; 2) partner with other states to create a regional exchange; or 3) choose not to act, in which case the federal government will establish their exchange. In accordance with the PPACA mandate that all state exchanges be operational by 2014, individual states have been holding informational hearings, conducting studies, and reviewing legislation to establish their state health exchanges.

Toward this end, states are moving quickly. To date, over half of all states have proposed legislation to



- continued on page 2 -

Health Care Reform: Where It Stands Today and How it Affects CRCs

– continued from front cover –

implement their exchanges. Most of these bills would create an independent entity to regulate and manage the exchange, certifying which health plans can be offered within the exchange and independently regulating health insurance products offered through exchange. While this is the intended direction for most states, California, Massachusetts, and Utah are the only states to date that have enacted legislation to establish their exchanges. Even so, California has not yet begun to propose regulations necessary to actually create the exchange. Whether or not they have proposed legislation, most states are still holding planning meetings or presentations to understand their options before finalizing their proposals. (For individual state activity updates, visit the CRCC website, clicking on Advocacy & Legislation, then Health Care Reform, or [click here](#).)

Of critical concern to CRCC and CRCs across the country will be how states address the state exchange plan benefit levels and “essential benefits” as proposed by the Health and Human Services Department (HHS). Guidance and definitions have been under review by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and HHS. It is expected that HHS will propose essential benefits based on IOM input in late 2011 or early 2012. These essential benefits will be the floor from which all state exchanges will regulate their health insurance market. States will create several benefit level options within their exchanges, with each option or plan addressing essential benefits differently. **These benefit levels, and what constitutes an essential benefit, are crucial to reimbursement for rehabilitation counseling services in the state exchanges, in health insurance plans generally, and in other state pro-**

grams that may be required to interact with an exchange, such as Medicaid.

While rehabilitation services are noted generally as an essential benefit in the PPACA, the definition of rehabilitation services, and the inclusion of rehabilitation counseling services in that definition, as well as their application to different benefit levels, will be left to HHS and the states. Therefore, the next two years will be crucial to exchange planning in every state. During this critical stage, **CRCC is committed to proactively advocate for the inclusion of rehabilitation counseling services for individuals with disabilities, with CRCs being the individuals qualified to provide those services.** Toward this end, CRCC has undertaken the following:

- Proactively provided input and perspective to state health care councils during their information-gathering and evaluation processes.
- Enlisted the services of Stateside Associates, a recognized leader in state and local government affairs, to monitor state health care reform proceedings, with particular attention to the development of state health exchanges, and to work with CRCC in coordinating advocacy efforts, including coordination of CRC volunteer efforts, in each state as activity necessitates.
- Reached out to its CRCs (via direct mail newsletter, email News Brief, and CRCC website) to solicit CRC volunteers interested and willing to assist with advocacy efforts in their state.

In our CRC volunteer efforts alone, we have identified over 100 CRCs who are willing to interact with legislative and regulatory groups so that the value of rehabilitation counseling

services will be understood as policy decisions are being made. Conference calls have already been held in every state to keep CRC volunteers engaged and informed. In addition, we are sending information, both instruction and background materials, by email to CRCs attending health care reform hearings or discussions in their states. CRCC heartily thanks all of these volunteers and looks forward to our continued work together in this effort.

However, **we need more CRC volunteers!** With 50 states all reviewing their state exchanges, benefit level options, and essential benefits, and with much at stake in terms of recognition of rehabilitation counseling services during this critical time, our advocacy efforts in this area will be extensive over the next two years. While we do have sufficient volunteer representation in several states based on current activity levels, there are many more states for which we still need greater CRC involvement. **We urge all interested CRCs to volunteer their time and energy to help in this crucial effort.** There is no substitute for members of the profession, side by side with the people with disabilities we serve, getting in front of their state councils to advocate for what we do. Please refer to the callout box on page 3 and volunteer today.

We will continue to keep you updated about both federal and state changes, as well as progress within the states as they move forward to develop their state health insurance exchanges. We hope to work together with you in this important effort. ●

Christine Reid, Ph.D., CRC, is chair of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. She is also immediate past chair of the CRCC Examination and Research Committee and is a Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Continuing Education (CE) Tools

#1. CRCC's Continuing Education: A Guide to Meeting Your Requirements

Planning your CE?

Not sure what qualifies?

Want to keep your costs down?

CRCs/CCRCs renewing their certification are required to accrue and submit 100 clock hours of continuing education; CVEs/CWAs/CCAAs are required to accrue and submit 80 clock hours of continuing education. While many certificants plan ahead to meet their CE requirements, there are also many who may not realize they have already completed training programs or activities that would qualify for CE credit hours. To provide assistance and direction, CRCC has developed a checklist that highlights the types of programs and activities that qualify for CE credit as well as the corresponding number of eligible CE hours. CRCC's **Continuing Education Guide**, available in both CRC/CCRC and CVE/CWA/CCAA versions, also provides money-saving tips to help all certificants proactively manage and minimize their CE costs. In addition to being accessible from the CRCC website (see links below), Continuing Education Guides will also be included in certification renewal packets mailed directly to all renewal candidates.

[View or Print CRC/CCRC Continuing Education Guide](#)

[View or Print CVE/CWA/CCAA Continuing Education Guide](#)

#2. CRCC's List of CE Providers with Pre-Approved Programs

"Pre-approved" CE programs and activities are particularly important as they have already been reviewed and approved by CRCC as qualifying for CE hours. Consequently, pre-approved

CE programs save time and money as they require less paperwork and no submission fees. To assist in locating such programs, CRCC has compiled a list of **CE Providers with Pre-Approved Programs**.

Every CE provider on the list offers one or more pre-approved CE programs. The list is available in an Excel worksheet, both in CRC/CCRC and CVE/CWA/CCAA versions.

[View or Print CRC/CCRC CE Providers with Pre-Approved Programs](#)

[View or Print CVE/CWA/CCAA CE Providers with Pre-Approved Programs](#)

#3. CRCC Home Study Programs

CRCC provides two Home Study programs as a means for CRCs/CCRCs to earn up to 9 clock hours of CE credit in ethics. **Home Study I** and **Home Study II** both provide a series of articles written by experts in the field covering areas most often seen by the CRCC Ethics Committee. To be eligible for CE credit, CRCs/CCRCs must read the articles, complete the questions, and submit to CRCC with the corresponding fee. Articles and questions

for both **Home Study I** (4.0 clock hours) and **Home Study II** (5.0 clock hours) are accessible via the following link:

[CRCC Home Study Programs](#)

Health Care Reform – CRCs: We Need Your Help!

All fifty states are currently establishing their individual health care reform councils to address the types of services and providers that will be covered under new Federal health care legislation. It is critical that state councils be aware of the integral role and function of Certified Rehabilitation Counselors in providing quality rehabilitation counseling services to individuals with disabilities.

The time is now!

This is a critical time for your voice as a CRC to be heard. CRCC is looking for CRCs who are willing to volunteer their time and energy to help in this effort. You don't have to be experienced in working with regulators as CRCC will provide state-specific guidance and support for all CRC volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering any amount of time, large or small, please complete a brief online questionnaire at www.crc certification.com/pages/advocate/181.php

Please consider volunteering to help in this effort.

Category R University Programs Now Available

In July 2010, CRCC instituted Category R – a new CRC Exam eligibility category that provides increased opportunity for CRC certification through the attainment of a post-graduate advanced certificate or degree in lieu of a second Master's degree in Counseling or Rehabilitation Counseling. Applying the same rigor as other categories, Category R enables qualified individuals with advanced degrees in thirteen areas of study to be eligible to sit for the CRC Exam upon completion of an integrated program of study focused on rehabilitation counseling course-

work and having completed requisite employment experience. Details on Category R can be found on pages 9-10 of the [CRC Certification Guide](#).

The following universities have reported to CRCC that they now have available the post-graduate advanced certificate or degree program that supports Category R requirements:

Hofstra University, on-campus program
San Diego State University, on-campus and distance education programs
University of Arkansas at Little Rock, distance education program

Utah State University, distance education program
Virginia Commonwealth University, on-campus and distance education programs

Five additional universities report that they are planning to have their Category R programs available in Summer/Fall 2011. *(Please note that all universities should be contacted directly for details.)* For the complete, updated Category R University List, including university contact information:

[View or Print Category R–University List](#)

MANAGE YOUR CRCC PROFILE ONLINE 24/7! OPT-IN TO THE PUBLIC SEARCH DIRECTORY!

Make online updates any day, any time from the convenience of your home or office.

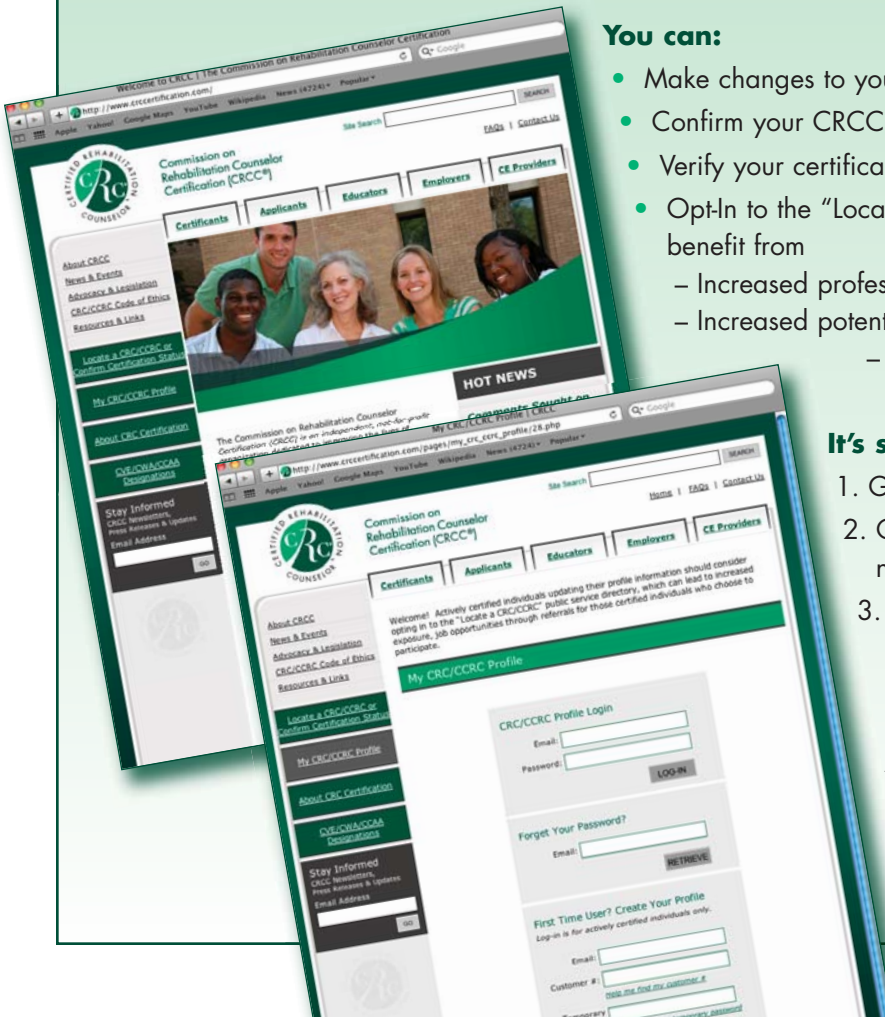
You can:

- Make changes to your Name, Address, Phone, and Email Address.
- Confirm your CRCC customer number.
- Verify your certification expiration date.
- Opt-In to the “Locate a CRC/CCRC” public service directory to benefit from
 - Increased professional exposure
 - Increased potential for new clients/job opportunities
 - Increased potential for professional referrals

It's so easy:

1. Go to the CRCC website at www.crccertification.com.
2. Click on “My CRC/CCRC Profile” link on the left-side navigation bar.
3. Enter your customer # and individual password. (If you do not know your customer number or individual password, email your request to info@crccertification.com.)
4. Make your changes and click on “Submit”.

That's it – You're done!



The CRCC Desk Reference Sample Pages

The CRCC Desk Reference on Professional Ethics goes well beyond the new 2010 Code – providing everything needed to support sound, ethical practice...all under one cover. It's clear, concise, user-friendly format makes it easy to access the most relevant resources and research when ethical concerns arise. It's also a great source for teaching ethics content and an invaluable student resource for building a strong foundation in ethics.

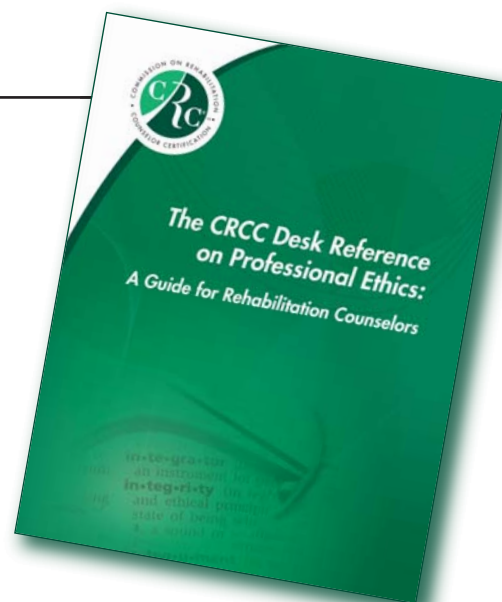
Just click to view a few sample pages:

- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Updated and New Training Scenarios](#)
- [Cross-Referenced Advisory Opinions](#)

Additional Desk Reference content:

- Research on Contemporary Decision-Making Paradigms
- Reference List of Seminal Articles
- Annotated Bibliography
- Comprehensive Set of Appendixes with Sample Forms
- Complete 2010 Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors
- Entire Desk Reference Text on CD

The 176-page CRCC Desk Reference is available for \$39.99 at www.elliottfitzpatrick.com or by calling 1-800-843-4977.



"The Desk Reference exemplifies the scope and the challenges of ethical dilemmas that a rehabilitation counselor may encounter... This comprehensive and thought-provoking text...user-friendly organization, content, and style...provides essential tools for application to daily professional practice."

Case, Jan. Book & Media Reviews.
Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling
(Summer 2010): 65-66.

CRCC RESEARCH NEWS

Periodic Update of Roles & Functions of Rehabilitation Counselors

CRCC periodically conducts a study among Certified Rehabilitation Counselors to identify the roles and functions as well as the knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks of a rehabilitation counselor. This research has broad applicability for the profession and serves as a foundation for updating the CRC Examination (CRCE), thus ensuring the CRCE continues to reflect current practice, which is critical to maintaining a valid and reliable certification process.

The CRCC Examination and Research Committee, working in conjunction

with independent contractors, has just launched an online survey with invitations to participate emailed to a representative, random, stratified sample of CRCs. Upon a detailed and thorough analysis of the information, recommendations for a new test blueprint for the CRCE are scheduled to be finalized in July 2011, with publications used to advance the field of practice to be developed shortly thereafter. **To all CRCs who receive an email invitation:** *As this is your chosen field and the future of your profession, we hope you take the time to participate.*

The Impact of Workplace Culture on Ethical Practice

Recent research, partially funded by a CRCC grant, regarding the effects and

impacts of workplace culture and workload on ethical practice for rehabilitation counselors, has been completed. Serving as the basis for one of the 2011 Ethics Webinars, research results address a range of important workplace issues including:

- Nature of ethical issues across different types of organizational cultures.
- Effects of supervisory skills on ethical responses to workplace issues.
- Effects of dishonesty, pressures, and power differentials on ethical compliance.

Full findings are in preparation for publication within the *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*.

Advocacy Update

VA Update

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently issued qualification standards for mental health specialists within the Veterans Health Administration, requiring licensed professional counselors to have a master's degree in mental health counseling or a related field from a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). According to the release, examples of related mental health counseling fields include, but are not limited to addiction counseling; community counseling; gerontology counseling; marital, couple, and family counseling; and marriage and family therapy.

Although this is a positive step forward for the counseling profession, the new standards exclude rehabilitation counselors who are also licensed professional counselors but who did not graduate from a CACREP-accredited counseling program. ARCA (American Rehabilitation Counseling Association), CORE (Council on Rehabilitation Education), CRCC, and NRCA (National Rehabilitation Counselor Association), to name a few, believe strongly that this narrow definition is not in the best interest of VA consumers – particularly veterans with disabilities who may not be able to receive services from counselors who have disability expertise.

According to a press release issued by the American Counseling Association (ACA), it will still take some time for the counseling positions to be posted on <http://usajobs.gov> or <http://www.vacareers.va.gov>, and for counselors to be appropriately recognized within the VA health care system. During that time, the VA will

be working on implementation of the new position descriptions and their use by VA facilities. ARCA, CORE, CRCC, and NRCA are working together and alongside ACA and others to advocate for more inclusive language, recommending specific modifications to the current standards and monitoring progress toward the recognition and hiring of graduates from CORE-accredited rehabilitation counselor education programs into mental health specialist positions within the VA.

Health Care Reform Legislation: State Highlights

Activity has expanded significantly in the past six months as states have become increasingly involved in developing plans for their state health care exchanges. The following states have updated activity to report since the last CRCC update in December, 2010.

Alabama	Montana
Alaska	Nebraska
California	Nevada
Colorado	New York
District of Columbia	North Carolina
Georgia	Ohio
Illinois	Oklahoma
Iowa	Rhode Island
Kansas	Tennessee
Massachusetts	Vermont
	Virginia

For state updates, go to CRCC website, [Health Care Reform page](#).

Recognition of the CRC Examination (CRCE) in General Counselor Licensure

CRCC continues to advocate for the recognition of rehabilitation counselors in general counselor licensure. Highlights of current activity are:

AASCB Conference Participation

CRCC, ARCA, and CORE continue their dialogue with the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) to promote recognition of the CRCE and CORE Standards within general counselor licensure laws and regulation such that rehabilitation counselors have access to credentials for which they are qualified without having to pursue additional education or take an additional exam. This position is reflected by AASCB recognition of the CRCE as an appropriate examination in its policies and procedures on license portability.

North Dakota

The North Dakota Board of Counselor Examiners is now considering recognition of the CRCE in its general counselor licensure regulations based on discussion introduced by one of its Board members in a January meeting. The Board will continue its consideration and discussion at its next meeting on May 24th. In preparation for this meeting, CRCC will provide information to apprise the Board of the CRCE, including content coverage of counseling knowledge domains.

Tennessee

A motion before the Board for Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapists, and Clinical and Pastoral Therapists to develop the rules necessary to formally recognize the CRCE and CORE standards in general counselor licensure was unanimously passed several weeks ago on March 4th. CRCC will continue to work with the Board on specific language to amend the current rules.

Washington D.C.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) recently recognized the

Advocacy Update - continued -

validity of the CRCE as a counseling examination as it moved to amend its Mental Health Rehabilitation Services regulations allowing Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) to function as Approving Qualified Practitioners (AQPs). Previously, LPCs were allowed to diagnose, treat, and be a "qualified" supervisor, but were not allowed to generate and sign-off on treatment plans, as they now can under the AQP designation. A remaining point reconciled just prior to the DHM's recognition of LPCs as AQPs, was their determination that the content of the CRCE adequately and reasonably measures counseling knowledge for licensing purposes.

CRCC Collaboration on Rehabilitation Counselor Profile

CRCC was invited to provide information on the rehabilitation counselor profile to the US Department of Labor,

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) – the agency that provides the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH). This information will be incorporated into a newly separate listing for rehabilitation counselors as the BLS breaks out Rehabilitation Counseling into its own heading separate and apart from the previous broader heading of Counseling. The OOH (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>) is an important reference widely used by professionals, individuals seeking entry into the profession, and the general public.

CRCC has also provided similar information to the American Medical Association (AMA) for inclusion in their *Health Care Careers Directory*. CRCC is pleased and honored to contribute to such highly visible and widely respected publications to showcase rehabilitation counseling, promote the profession, and highlight the value and need for rehabilitation counselors.

EDUCATORS: A Special Message

To those educators actively involved in, or knowledgeable of, the activities and discussions of their state licensing boards, **please be sure to contact CRCC as you become aware of opportunities for recognition of the CRCE in state licensing rules and/or regulations.** Recent success in Tennessee was the direct result of a collaborative effort between CRCC and Dr. Steve Zanskas of The University of Memphis, initiated by Dr. Zanskas. CRCC thanks Dr. Zanskas for his proactive involvement and looks forward to similar contacts from educators in the coming months. Your eyes, ears, and initiative can make a difference in advancing quality services for individuals with disabilities in your state and in providing full access for your students to practice their profession.

CRC Examination Test Schedule

Application Packet Deadline	Testing Dates	Exam Results Available
October 15, 2010	March 4-12, 2011	April 18, 2011
February 15, 2011	July 8-16, 2011	August 22, 2011
May 16, 2011	October 7-15, 2011	November 21, 2011
October 15, 2011	March 2-10, 2012	April 16, 2012
February 15, 2012	July 13-21, 2012	August 27, 2012
May 15, 2012	October 5-13, 2012	November 19, 2012

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