



SDCA News Bites

South Dakota Counseling Association

Legislative Update on HB1186

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During the 2009 legislative session HB1186 was passed. This bill makes it possible for school counselors to be paid a stipend for obtaining national certification by earning the National Certified School Counselor credential through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).

This July the South Dakota Board of Education approved administrative rules for HB1186. You can find a copy of them on the SDSCA website.

Due to difficult economic times, the teacher compensation program was cut last year from the state's budget. When funding is available,

teachers and school counselors will be able to receive a \$5000 stipend from the state and a \$5000 stipend from local districts who choose to match the state's stipend. This stipend is paid out over a five year period of time.

This legislation may not seem like a big accomplishment because there is currently no money available, but in actuality this is a big step for school counselors. HB1186 acknowledges that school counselors provide unique services for students. It also acknowledges that school counselors are trained differently than

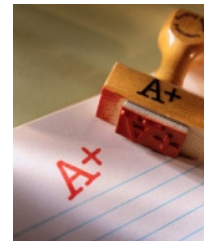
teachers and deserve to be able to become nationally certified through an organization for counselors.

School counselors who wish to learn more about the National Certified School Counselor credential can visit <http://www.nbcc.org/certifications/ncsc/NCSCPath.aspx> if you currently hold the NCC or <http://www.nbcc.org/certifications/ncsc/NCSCNCCPath.aspx> if you do not hold the NCC credential.

Also visit the SDSCA website for more information at <http://www.counselors.k12.sd.us>.

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SDCA Sets Goals for 2009-2010

The South Dakota Counseling Association (SDCA) board met in early August to craft a strategic plan for 2009-2010. Three main goals were identified. This year SDCA will focus on the following: connecting to an uncertain world, advocacy/legislation, and membership/services.

In order to stay better

connected with members, SDCA will be providing several short news bites and two full newsletters this year. SDCA will also be providing publications for members and areas of specialty to use in their daily work. Also, be looking for a new updated and more user-friendly webpage.

This year in the legislative and advocacy area, SDCA will focus on a grassroots effort for

Medicare reimbursement, a school counselor mandate, and advocacy for the counseling profession.

As always, the members of SDCA are critical to the association's success, so SDCA will also work to bring members the services they need. Some of the services planned will include workshops, CEU's, membership cards and more.

2 Letter from the President:

SDCA Members,

Kelly Duncan, Jim Korcuska, Marlys Schmidt, and I attended the summer ACA Leadership Institute in Washington, DC July 29-August 1st. One of the many objectives of the Leadership Institute included a legislative visit to Capital Hill to advocate for Medicare Coverage/Reimbursement for Professional Counselors (LISW's are covered, but not PC's). This event included representatives from all around the country and was one of the largest gatherings of Professional Counselors on Capital Hill.

The four of us had productive meetings with the offices of Senators Johnson and Thune as well as the office of Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin. Disappointed that each of our elected officials were unable to meet with us, representatives for each office responded that their legislators supported professional counselors being covered by Medicare. Some of the legislative staff members asked a number of specific questions related to Medicare reimbursement and how it impacts particular constituents here in South Dakota. They reiterated that the Senators/Representatives are looking for any detailed testimony from professional counselors who have experienced difficulty or had clients experience difficulty due to not being covered by Medicare.

Brian Dannen has been appointed Chairperson of the SDCA Government Relations Committee and will be monitoring/working on this issue and needs the support/stories from SDCA members. As a professional counselor, student in the field,

or as a concerned citizen of the State of South Dakota and have experienced or heard of difficulty due to not being covered by Medicare, this is an excellent time to send any e-mail testimonies to Brian at Brian.Dannen@k12.sd.us. He will compile them and send them to ACA which will combine them with the testimonies of professional counselors all around the country to send to Senators/Representatives. This is also a good time to send any personal messages to Rep. Herseth Sandlin or Senators Johnson or Thune before they return from recess in September.

There is an excellent update regarding Medicare/healthcare in the Aug. 2009 ACA Counseling Today issue (on page. 10). It includes the specific position/messages which can be personalized and sent to the representatives prior to them returning in September. You can also visit <http://capwiz.com/counseling/home/> for more information or to send a personalize e-mail message.

SDCA will continue working on this issue along with several others facing professional counselors nationwide as well as in our own state. If counselors are not covered by Medicare by spring 2010, we will strategize at the Spring Board Meeting at the conference in Aberdeen on how to continue to advocate for Medicare coverage of Professional Counselors. I also wish to invite each and every one of you to join us for the annual Day on the Hill in Pierre on January 22, 2010. For further details, please contact Brian or Marlys Schmidt at sdca@svtv.com.

Sincerely,

Chris Roseman
President, South Dakota Counseling Association

Board Member Spotlight:

Hello. My name is Brian Dannen and I am the current Government Relations chair for the SDCA and the SDSCA. I was very happy to be involved with the passing of bill HB 1186, and I am looking forward to new legislation this year. I am president elect of the North Central Chapter, and I am a board member with Safe Harbor (domestic abuse shelter). I currently work as a therapist with K-8 students that are part of a self contained classroom due to their emotional/behavioral difficulties. I also work as a therapist for

Northeastern Mental Health Center part-time. I am a certified school counselor and hold the LPC, QMHP, and NCC credentials. I'm also completing my LPC-MH. I have two children ages six and two with another child due in March of 2010. I have been married for six years to a wonderful wife who supports me. I enjoy spending time playing with my family. I play on golf and volleyball leagues to exercise my stress away. I look forward to meeting and working with each one of you. Remember to always keep hope alive!

Graduation

Requirements Update:

During the 2009 legislative session the legislature voted to change the graduation requirements. For more information and background on this issue, please visit the SD Department of Education web-site at

<http://doe.sd.gov/oatq/gradrequirements/>