Professional Counselors: Medicare Facts

Professional Counselors are required by Texas statutes to hold a master’s or doctoral degree, pass rigorous licensing exams, complete extensive hours of post-graduate supervision and pursue continuing education. Certified School Counselors must also have two years of classroom teaching experience.

Professional Counselors work in private practice; at elementary and secondary schools; on college campuses; in criminal justice facilities; at community mental health centers, hospitals, nursing homes, managed care and non-profit agencies; and other settings across Texas.

Mental Health Services in Texas:

- 12% of Texas residents are Medicare beneficiaries (3.18 million).
- 1.4 million Texans used Medicare Hospital Outpatient Services in 2010.
- 1 in 4 Texans lack health insurance.
- 4.5 million Texas adults have a diagnosable mental health disorder; of these, 1.2 million are unable to perform at work, school or in the community due to their illness.
- Only 37.5% of Texan adults with a mental illness received mental health treatment or counseling from 2009-2013.
- 60% of seriously mentally ill adults who are served in the public mental health system in Texas are uninsured.

Professional Counselors WANT to Help:

LPCs in Texas are an untapped resource who WANT to help our elderly and disabled heal. Unfortunately, LPCs are effectively prohibited from aiding this population because their services are not covered under Medicare. Counselors in Texas are asking our congressional delegation to support legislation that would establish LPCs as Medicare providers for medically necessary outpatient psychotherapy services. If LPCs were included as Medicare providers, many of Texas’ 206 Health Provider Shortage Area counties would drop off that list.

Mental Health and the Eligible Medicare Population:

- Nationwide, approximately 37% of seniors display symptoms of depression in a primary care environment.
- In the U.S., at least 5.6 million to 8 million older adults (about 14 to 20% of the overall elderly population) have one or more mental disorders.
- Mental health conditions in older Americans are associated with a wide range of negative effects, including increased functional disability, reduced physical health, increased mortality, higher rates of suicide, and high overall treatment costs.
- The Institute of Medicine recently reported that the “burden of mental illness and substance use disorder in older adults in the U.S. borders on a crisis,” and there is a “conspicuous lack” of national attention to ensuring sufficient numbers of mental health service providers for the rapidly growing elderly population.

For more information, contact: ______________________________________________________________

For source information please refer to the Texas Counseling Association website www.txca.org or contact robin@txca.org.

2014 DSHS and TEA data reports there are 21,412 Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC and LPC-Interns) and 40,041 Certified School Counselors (CSC) in Texas. **Combined, these 61,450 Professional Counselors make-up the largest group of behavioral health professionals in the state.**
Who is TCA?

Founded in 1947, the Texas Counseling Association (TCA) represents more than 7,300 Professional Counselors who work in a variety of settings to empower individuals, families, students and groups to accomplish their mental health, education and career goals.

TCA Divisions

**TAACE** Texas Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education - Promotes research, development, technical competency and ethical practices for measurement and evaluation in counseling.

**TAADA** Texas Association for Adult Development and Aging - Promotes resources and leadership on the development process of adults through the life span and the problems of aging.

**TACES** Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision - Promotes the preparation of professional counselors through accreditation, certification, supervision and professional development.

**TALGBTIC** Texas Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling - Promotes tolerance and non-threatening counseling environments that support the unique needs of clients and reduce stereotypical thinking and prejudice.

**TAHEAD** Texas Association for Humanistic Education and Development - Promotes human development practices that emphasize education of the whole person and instructional strategies that foster humanistic approaches.

**TAMFC** Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors - Promotes issues, interests and the delivery of services in the area of marriage and family therapy, divorce counseling and mediation.

**TCCA** Texas College Counseling Association - Promotes college counseling programs that foster student development, support ethical practices and encourage cooperation within higher education.

**TCDA** Texas Career Development Association - Promotes a greater understanding of the meaning of work; fosters career development over the life span; and establishes standards of professional service in the field of career development.

**TexAMCD** Texas Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development - Promotes the understanding and appreciation of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity; human and civil rights, and multicultural counseling.

**TMHCA** Texas Mental Health Counselor Association - Promotes improvements to the availability and quality of mental health counseling services for professionals in private practice, agency, hospital, business and industrial settings.

**TSCA** Texas School Counselor Association - Supports counselors, strengthens students, promotes success; provides advocacy and best practice resources to empower school counselors to deliver comprehensive guidance and counseling programs which promote student success.

**TxCSJ** Texas Counselors for Social Justice - Fosters optimal social, emotional, and cultural development with dignity for all individuals by actively promoting societal equity, access, participation, harmony, empowerment, and advocacy.

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