



**Iowa
Mental
Health
Counselors
Association**



**AMERICAN COUNSELING
ASSOCIATION of IOWA**
A Branch of the American Counseling Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2019

CONTACTS: See End of Release

**Iowa Counseling Organizations Issue Joint Response
to Proposed Rule Changes by the Iowa Board of Behavioral Sciences**

The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association and the American Counseling Association of Iowa Unite as IBBS Prepares to Issue Revisions to Proposed Rule Changes

Des Moines, Iowa, September 30, 2019 — On September 12, 2019, members of the Iowa Board of Behavioral Sciences (IBBS) gathered in Des Moines, IA to review and discuss, among other agenda items, public comment for the proposed rule changes to Chapters 31 and 32 of the Iowa Administrative Code. Both ACA of Iowa and the Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA) submitted comments prior to the September 1st deadline voicing conflicting perspectives and providing justifications for those positions. While these comments were in stark opposition of one another, they were nonetheless derived from the same underlying desire to support the interests of mental health practitioners throughout the state while ensuring that Iowa consumers have access to qualified and ethically competent clinicians offering only the highest levels of care. Members from each organization's executive leadership team were present to defend their positions during the meeting.

ACA of Iowa and IMHCA listened respectfully as each organization presented their comments during the September 12th meeting; both acknowledging that as professional associations with similar goals and many overlapping members, although our positions may differ at times, there is far more that connects us, than divides us. Driven by this shared belief and a desire to act in the best interest of the profession and the members we represent, IMHCA President Courtney Ackerson, IMHCA Past-President Kacey Peterson, and ACA of Iowa President Rich Stapleton, opted to put differences aside and present several compromises to the proposed rule changes for consideration by the board; changes that we are confident members from both organizations can support.

After discussing the edits and reviewing facts about the potential impact of their decision on factors ranging from license portability to Medicare recognition at the federal level, the board voted to incorporate the recommended changes and issue another notice for public comment on the revised proposal. It is unclear when this notice and the edited proposal will be posted for public comment, but you can count on IMHCA and ACA of Iowa to continue monitoring the situation and keep you informed as things move forward.

In closing, we would like to address some of the comments shared publicly through social media in the days prior to the September 12th meeting, and remind you, our friends and colleagues, that as mental health professionals we are often (and rightfully so) held to a higher standard of behavior than most. This is true of our actions, as well as our words.

As volunteer board members and your elected leaders, we spend countless hours away from our homes, our families, and our jobs to promote and advocate for all mental health counselors; serving as your voice, eyes, and ears whenever possible and representing our profession, along with our

respective associations, to the best of our abilities. We will undoubtedly disagree from time to time, but if we work together our disagreements do not have to divide us. Through a commitment by all to listen and engage in a thoughtful and respectful manner, opposing perspectives can ultimately serve as important and necessary catalysts for growth and change not only within the profession, but within ourselves. After all, it is rarely the stance we take that people remember in the end; it is how we choose to respond to the opposition that sets us apart from the rest.

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If you would like more information about this topic, the American Counseling Association of Iowa, or the Iowa Mental Health Counselors please call or email the representatives listed below.



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