



# ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Fifty-sixth Legislature  
Second Regular Session

House: HHS DP 9-0-0-1

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## **HB 2279: behavioral health professionals; addiction counseling.**

**Sponsor: Representative Gress, LD 4**

**House Engrossed**

### **Overview**

Replaces the *practice of substance abuse counseling* with *addiction counseling* to include treatment for all forms of addiction that are persistent, compulsive dependence on a behavior or substance.

### **History**

#### ***AzBBHE***

The Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners (AzBBHE) is authorized to establish and maintain standards of qualifications and performance for licensed behavioral health professionals in the areas of counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work and substance abuse counseling and to regulate the practice of licensed behavioral health professionals for protection of the public.

The *practice of substance abuse counseling* is the professional application of general counseling theories, principles and techniques as specifically adapted, based on research and clinical experience, to the specialized needs and characteristics of persons who are experiencing substance abuse, chemical dependency and related problems and to the families of those persons. This includes assessment, appraisal and diagnoses or the use of psychotherapy for the purpose of evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of individuals, couples, families and groups ([A.R.S. §32-3251](#)).

#### ***Licensed Substance Abuse Technicians***

A person who wishes to be licensed by AzBBHE as a substance abuse technician must present documentation as prescribed by AzBBHE by rule that they have received either an associate degree in chemical dependency or substance abuse with an emphasis on counseling or a bachelor's degree in behavioral science with an emphasis on counseling. Both degrees must be from a regionally accredited college or university that meets the requirements as described in AzBBHE rules. Applicants must also pass an examination approved by AzBBHE and licensees can only practice under direct supervision ([A.R.S. § 32-3321](#)).

#### ***Licensed Associated Substance Abuse Counselors***

A person who wishes to be licensed by AzBBHE as an associate substance abuse counselor must present evidence as prescribed by AzBBHE rules that the person has received either a bachelor's degree in a behavioral science with an emphasis on counseling or a master's or higher degree in a behavioral science with an emphasis on counseling. Both degrees must be from a regionally accredited college or university that meets the requirements as described in AzBBHE rules. Specifically, applicants who received a bachelor's degree in a behavioral science must also show proof that they completed at least 1,600 hours of direct client contact work experience in at least 24 months in substance abuse counseling under supervision. For

the direct client contact hours, not more than 400 hours can be in psychoeducation. Applicants must also pass an examination approved by AzBBHE ([A.R.S. § 32-3321](#)).

### ***Licensed Independent Substance Abuse Counselors***

A person who wishes to be licensed by AzBBHE as an independent substance abuse counselor by AzBBHE must: 1) have received a master's or higher degree in a behavioral science with an emphasis on counseling, in a program that is approved by AzBBHE or that meets the requirements as prescribed by rule, from a regionally accredited college or university; 2) present documentation as prescribed by AzBBHE rules that the applicant has received at least 1,600 hours of work experience in at least 24 months in substance abuse counseling with direct client contact under supervision that meets the requirements as prescribed by rule; 3) pass an examination approved by AzBBHE; and 4) provide an attestation from their supervisor on a AzBBHE approved form that the applicant was observed during supervised hours to have demonstrated satisfactory competency in clinical documentation, consultation, collaboration and coordination of care related to clients to whom the person provided direct care and has a rating of at least satisfactory in overall performance. For the direct client contact hours, not more than 400 hours can be in psychoeducation ([A.R.S. § 32-3321](#)).

### **Provisions**

1. Broadens the practice of substance abuse counseling to include treatment for all forms of addiction. (Sec. 7)
2. Replaces statutory uses of the term substance abuse counseling with the term addiction counseling. (Sec 1-13)
3. Defines the *practice of addiction counseling* to mean the professional application of general counseling theories, principles and techniques to the specialized needs of persons who are experiencing an addiction that is a persistent, compulsive dependance on a behavior or substance, including mood altering behaviors or activities known as process addictions. (Sec. 7)
4. Instructs *licensed substance abuse technicians, associate substance abuse counselors and independent substance abuse counselors* to change their licensure designation to *licensed addiction technician, associate addiction counselor or independent addiction counselor* by their license renewal date upon the effective date of this act. (Sec. 14)
5. Exempts AzBBHE from rulemaking requirements for one year in order to license and regulate addiction counselors and technicians. (Sec. 15)
6. Makes technical and conforming changes. (Sec. 1, 4, 6-10, 12, 13)

<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 105 (45 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 108 (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Note
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