



ISSUE MEMORANDUM	
DATE	May 13, 2009
TO	SB 1441 Substance Abuse Coordination Committee
FROM	SB 1441 Uniform Standards Staff Working Group Presented by: Marilyn Kimble, Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians
SUBJECT	SB 1441 Uniform Standard # 5

SB 1441 REQUIREMENT

(5) Standards governing all aspects of group meeting attendance requirements, including, but not limited to, required qualifications for group meeting facilitators, frequency of required meeting attendance, and methods of documenting and reporting attendance or nonattendance by licensees.

DRAFT UNIFORM STANDARD # 5

If the board has determined that it is necessary for a licensee to attend facilitated group meetings, the following standards shall apply:

1. For any facilitated group, the meeting facilitator must have a minimum of three (3) years experience in the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abuse.
2. When determining the frequency of required facilitated group meeting attendance, consideration shall be given to the following:
 - licensee's history;
 - documented length of sobriety/time that has elapsed since substance use;
 - recommendation of the clinical evaluator;
 - scope and pattern of use;
 - licensee's medical history and current medical condition
 - licensee's treatment history; and,
 - nature, duration, and severity of substance abuse.
3. The licensee shall be required to submit to the board, at least once a month, documentation signed by the group meeting facilitator that includes the licensee's name, the group name, the meeting date and location, and the licensee's level of participation and progress in treatment.
4. If a licensee is required to attend a facilitated group meeting, the facilitator shall report unexcused absences within two (2) business days.

DISCUSSION

In considering group facilitator qualifications, discussion included that diversion programs have separate and unique qualification requirements for their facilitators, which are reflective of the specific profession. A facilitator's experience is viewed as an essential qualification. Programs typically already have defined qualifications that are more stringent than the minimum qualification standard drafted here.

In determining frequency of meeting attendance, it was recognized that individual licensees are in different stages/phases that range from active addiction to short and/or long term evidence of recovery/sobriety. Each of the elements listed are essential in determining how these meetings will aid licensees in maintaining their recovery/sobriety and ultimately, the public's safety.

Documentation of attendance and reports on nonattendance at meetings is an existing requirement of the various diversion programs. Again, programs may have requirements that are more stringent than those outlined here.

Community and faith-based 12-step programs were discussed. The value these groups offer licensees in maintaining their sobriety is recognized. However, while licensees may utilize and depend on the support they offer, the anonymous nature of these programs precludes close examination or outside regulation.

PROS/CONS

No strong arguments, either for or against the standard as drafted, were identified in the group's discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Scheduled absences versus nonattendance at meetings and timeframe for reporting unexpected absences.

This comment was considered and the draft standard was edited to read "...facilitator shall report unexcused absences..." rather than "...nonattendance..."

The language of the original draft was also changed to reflect the need to address unexcused absences without delay.

2. Strengthen language regarding documentation requirements.

The Working Group's original draft language was edited to include these suggestions.