

## **MHRT/Community Certification Program Redesign FAQs**

### **Applying for Certification**

*Q: Who can qualify to be hired as a new MHRT/C?*

A: Individuals with the appropriate education, work experience, and training can earn the MHRT/Community provisional or full certification. This is true in the current program and it will not change. In the re-designed program, we plan to have an online application process which will be found at the Center for Learning's (CFL) web site. This is not active yet. Applicants should continue to apply under the current system.

### **Provisional MHRT/C Certificates**

*Q: How do you meet the provisional requirements?*

A: The pathway to certification (full or provisional) depends on an applicant's qualifications coming into the application process. Applicants need related training, education, and/or work experience. There will be unique pathways with different requirements depending on an applicant's qualifications.

*Q: How will the changes affect people who currently hold a provisional certificate?*

A: This will depend on the requirements an individual has left to complete for full certification and what qualifications they already have. We will review applications on a case-by-case basis during the transition. We expect to utilize elements of both systems in order to assist the applicant to achieve full certification.

*Q: Will there be extensions for the provisional certificate? Or, if they don't get done what is needed, will it expire, and will they have to complete everything before they get their full certificate?*

A: Extensions to provisional certificates will only be considered on a case by case basis. Yes, certificates will expire after two years if the requirements are not met. All the requirements must be completed before receiving full certification.

### **Full MHRT/C Certificates**

*Q: Will Muskie send notices to staff who currently hold a certificate to let them know what their renewal date will be?*

A: We plan to employ as many communication vehicles as possible to reach current full certificate holders. Because thousands of certificates have been issued, we expect to prioritize issuing new certificates to people who are currently working in licensed agencies. Up to this point, there has been no obligation for certificate holders to keep us informed about their current contact information. It will be a challenge to reach everyone and we will look to providers (and other contacts) for assistance with getting the word out so that MHRT/Cs can contact us. We will have a designated email address for this purpose, which will be posted as soon as it's available.

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*Q: In July of 2018, will all current providers receive a certificate with an expiration date of July 2020 and need to complete 18 hours of CEU's in the new domains over that time frame?*

A: Beginning in January 2018, all newly issued full certificates will have a two-year expiration date, during which time the MHRT/C can complete the continuing education requirement.

Current full MHRT/C certificate holders will be phased-in to the new system and will be issued new certificates. In order to make a smooth transition, that expiration date will depend on the month their original certificate was issued, and will always be at least two years from the issue date.

*Q: Will current MHRT/C's need to receive classes in the new domains or have the domain waived by a clinical supervisor if they have relevant work experience?*

A: Current **Full MHRT/C certificate holders** do not need to reapply under the new system. They will be issued a new certificate with a two-year expiration date and be required to complete 18 hours of continuing education in the new competency domains in order to renew their certificate.

*Q: Will the current full MHRT/C's need to complete the Introduction to Maine's Mental Health System 101 online module, or is that strictly for provisional certificates?*

A: Current full MHRT/C certificate holders are not required to take the online module, but it is an option if they choose to take it. It will be open to the public.

### **Continuing Education Requirement**

*Q: I just want to clarify under MHRT/C full certificate I would need an 18 hour training which includes ethics every two years?*

A: The continuing education requirement for full certificate renewal every two years is 18 hours, including four hours in ethics. You can meet this requirement by taking a number of distinct trainings if you choose; it doesn't have to be one 18 hour course. The workshops, webinars, online courses, conferences, and/or trainings must address one or more of the new competency domains and, you will need to provide documentation including the title of the applicable training(s), the trainer's name, number of hours (must total a minimum of 18 hours), date of training(s), and certificate(s) of completion. We will have a renewal form to complete, which can be downloaded from the CFL web site when it becomes available.

*Q: If a clinician has a professional license, can they use the same continuing education training hours to apply to the 18 hour requirement for the MHRT/C?*

A: Yes, those hours will be accepted as long as they apply to the competency domains. If someone takes continuing education for their LCPC, LSW, or other professional license or certificate, the continuing education hours can count for both as long as they apply to the MHRT/C competency domains. Note: Each licensing board has its own requirements so the MHRT/C competency domains might or might not be applicable to another license. You would need to check with the particular licensing board.

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*Q: Do certificates for the CEUs need to be sent in or will this work like other professional licenses in which we attest that we completed the required CEUs?*

A: The MHRT/C certificate holder must provide documentation that training has been completed for the 18 hours of continuing education in addition to a renewal form. The continuing education must apply to the new competency domains, with a minimum of four hours in ethics.

*Q: Do we need approval for trainings to ensure that they fall within one of the domains and will count toward their continuing education requirement?*

A: Pre-approval for continuing education training is not required but, if you have any doubt about the applicability of a program, we'd be happy to review it for you. If a program is approved for other licenses' continuing education requirements, we would most likely accept it, as long as it applies to the competency domains.

*Q: Can an agency develop its own training to fulfill some of the continuing education requirements?*

A: Yes, as long as it applies to the competency domains and is documented as continuing education. It may not be a weekly supervisory meeting, for example.

### **Pre-approved Academic Degree and Certificate Programs**

*Q: Will there continue to be college degrees and certificate programs in Maine that result in the MHRT/C certificate upon completion?*

A: Yes, at present the current pre-approved academic programs and courses are being reviewed for alignment with the new competency domains with an anticipated roll-out of fall semester 2019. Some academic programs might be able to offer their courses sooner, depending on their progress making any necessary adjustments.

### **Non-academic Training for Certification**

*Q: How many hours did you just say would be needed for non-academic training to count?*

A: The number of hours for an individual to complete a competency domain will depend on what pathway they are on. There will be distinct pathways depending on an individual's educational, work experience, and training qualifications. The requirement will be 18, 24 or 30 hours. We've recognized, and many of you might be aware, that under the current system some individuals who have a degree might still need to take a significant number of hours of an academic or non-academic training to complete their certification. With the pathways, we want to be sure that we recognize people's educational experience as well as their work experience. Those factors will be taken into account.

*Q: How would an agency go about becoming a training provider for non-academic courses?*

A: We will get more information out about potential non-academic courses and what the process for developing courses will be. Stay tuned on that. We know there are a lot of questions around this and we want to make sure that there are a variety of avenues for both online and face-to-face training.

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*Q: Do we need approval for non-academic trainings to ensure that they fall within one of the domains and will count toward certification?*

A: The non-academic program is under development and will offer pre-approved and perhaps standard curricula for some of the domains. It is possible an applicant could submit a training for approval, but the model has not been finalized. Stay tuned for more detailed information on that.

### **Authorized Agencies**

*Q: Some agencies are authorized to administer MHRT/C certification. Will this process continue?*

A: During the transition period we'll be running two parallel systems, therefore, all certificates will be administered through the Muskie School's Center for Learning. We'll evaluate after the transition period whether to authorize agencies. The program will have a more robust database; each certificate will have a unique identification number and an expiration date. More details to come on that.

### **Waiver Process for Certification**

*Q: Can you clarify a little more about what experience can be waived by a clinical supervisor?*

A: The waiver process will be much the same as the current program. Supervisors will need to attest to the applicant's mastery of each competency listed in the domain. (Each domain has a unique set of competencies.) The supervisor will also briefly describe how the individual demonstrated those competencies in their work, similar to the current waiver. At this time, the priority Domains 1, 2 and 3 may not be waived.

*Q: How many domains can be waived?*

A: An applicant may waive up to four domains with relevant work experience. At this time, the first three priority domains may not be waived.

*Q: I know you aren't addressing questions within this webinar, but I can't help myself. Isn't clinical supervision of MHRT's required?*

A: Yes, MHRT/C's are required to have clinical supervision. One of the current barriers to a MHRT 1 moving up on a career ladder, for example, is that they lack clinical supervision. They have administrative supervision. They haven't been able to get a waiver for their work experience due to the supervisory status and we've had many providers say, "We have MHRT 1 staff who would make great MHRT/Cs, but there's no clear pathway". We hope to improve that with this change to the waiver process, and we'll provide additional details and processes in the near future.

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### Code of Conduct

*Q: A few question about the new Code of Conduct:*

- When will this be shared so agencies can determine a process to educate and monitor this requirement?
- Will there be a specific form that is expected to be signed off on or do we develop it ourselves?
- I used to oversee the crisis line at TOA and someone from Muskie came to review the service including personnel files – I assume that is the same with MHRT/C? If so, will you be looking for this form along with the certificate in the personnel record?

A: The Code of Conduct will be released as soon as the Department approves the final version. This should happen by the middle of December 2017. The document itself has a signatory line for the supervisor and MHRT/C to use, and includes space for the supervisor's license # and credentials. The form should be kept in the personnel file, and may be subject to review during the State's Quality Assurance process. The current plan is to introduce the Code of Conduct to contracts beginning SFY19.

*Q: With the new emphasis on ethics, will there be a formal system in place to file complaints on those that hold MHRT/C certification and provide unethical care?*

A: The redesigned certification program with an emphasis on ethics will not result in a formal board or registry system. The changes reflect an effort to increase awareness of ethical standards and to promote a high level of quality care.

### Other

*Q: What would be the cost going forward for each training module? Can they all be done online?*

A: The new "Introduction to Maine's Mental Health System 101..." online module is free and open to the public. The non-academic training model is still being developed. The plan is to provide multiple ways a person can obtain the necessary training, including online options. No costs have been established yet.

*Q: Do you anticipate that there will still be financial support from the State?*

A: The tuition reimbursement program will continue with a finite amount of funding targeted to obtaining the required education for full certification. The program is being reviewed and there could be changes made in the future.

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*Q: If we have other questions whom should we contact?*

A: The MHRT certification web site can be accessed with this link: <http://www.cfl-muskie.org/>.

Contact information is below.

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Stay tuned to the CFL or SAMHS web site for further MHRT/C certification program updates:  
<http://www.cfl-muskie.org/>