

June 28, 2019

MHRT/C Certification Program Update



Year-end Review

As the Muskie School Center for Learning (CFL) closes out its 2019 contract year, we take this opportunity to review advances that have been made with the MHRT/C redesign initiative, and look ahead for what's to come.

- Since January 2018, new Full MHRT/C certificates have been issued with a two-year expiration period and a continuing education requirement for renewal. Full certificates issued under the 2008 Guidelines or before, are being reissued under the new program. To date, **1353** certificates have been reissued, and we expect more over the next several months. (If you need an updated certificate, see page 2 FMI.)
- Another element of the redesigned certification program that has been implemented under the existing program is the Credit for Work Experience (CWE), previously known as the Waiver option. An individual with a human services-related academic degree can now use *six months* of related work experience to satisfy a course requirement. Related work experience is defined as work in adult mental health services. An individual *without* a related academic degree can use *12 months* of work experience. Under this revised option an individual can waive up to four of the ten course requirements.
- As of June 28, 2019, 11 academic degree programs and two certificate programs, across Maine are approved to offer MHRT/C courses toward full certification. We expect there will be more to follow this summer and fall, enabling applicants to earn certification while getting academic credit toward a degree. Approved programs are listed on the CFL website, under #4 on the Certification Program Updates page.
- An Ethics subcommittee was formed as part of the redesign initiative to elevate awareness of and attention to ethical concerns in the workforce. Beginning July 1, 2018, the Maine Office of SAMHS incorporated a Code of Conduct to their provider contracts, with a requirement to review the Code annually with MHRT/C and MHRT I staff, and maintain documentation of such in an employee's file. A copy *does not* need to be sent to SAMHS.

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¹For more information on the MHRT/C updates: WWW.CFL-MUSKIE.org

Looking Ahead: Standardized Non-academic MHRT/C Training

SAMHS is developing standardized curricula for all eight of the new MHRT/C competency domains. Courses should be available in the next fiscal year and FY21.

Experienced trainers may apply to become *trained to teach* one or more of these courses. Each domain has its own set of requirements. Trainers must demonstrate qualifications in several areas: educational background, relevant work experience, training experience, and subject matter expertise. Licensure may be required depending on the domain. The revised Non-Academic Trainer Standards should be available later this summer detailing those required qualifications.

If a trainer's application is accepted, there will be a day-long face-to-face training of the particular curriculum they want to teach, and a two-hour online training module to complete, as part of the application process. Once a trainer completes the required trainings and is approved to teach, they will be able to teach the 30-hour (5-day), face-to-face curriculum(curricula) in whatever setting they choose. They will be independent of SAMHS to establish their own schedule and fee structure. They will be responsible to promote and administer their courses.

There will be standards a trainer must comply with to offer the trainings and ongoing quality assurance of the trainings will be monitored by SAMHS.

Stay tuned - we'll keep you posted on the development of this training option, including information about the trainer standards when it becomes available.

Why Require Continuing Education?

Early in the MHRT/C redesign initiative, involved stakeholders (providers, academics, consumers, state staff and others) made very clear that the absence of a continuing education (CE) requirement and no system for monitoring certificates impaired the fidelity and overall quality of the certification. Comparisons were made with other related certificates and licenses to inform the decision-making process, resulting in an 18-hour requirement within a two-year period for renewal. SAMHS is committed to monitoring the success of the new requirement and will review the process periodically to insure that the methods used for meeting CE requirements address the identified need.

As evidenced by this redesign initiative, the behavioral health landscape is rapidly changing. The CE requirement provides an important opportunity to strengthen knowledge and skills in some of the new MHRT/C competency domain areas such as policy, ethics, and integrated care, and could help the MHRT/C certificate holder target and identify areas for further professional development.

CE is one way to help the workforce stay abreast of the latest developments, skills, and changes that impact their clients, and be informed about best practices in care and support. Added benefits to taking CE are networking with peers and changing your work routine.

What will happen if I don't update my full MHRT/C certificate? Full MHRT/C certificates that are not updated with an expiration date, will be invalid after January 1, 2020. Please send us your complete current contact information to: updatemhrtccontactinfo@cfl-muskie.org

We'll issue new certificates over the next several months.