

Mental Health Services Protection Act

Overview

It is vital for all Albertans to have access to safe, quality care when accessing residential addiction treatment facilities and have protections as consumers.

The proposed *Mental Health Services Protection Act* would protect Albertans by putting standards in place for residential addiction programs/services and professionals who provide counselling services.

The Act would set requirements now and create a framework for the future. Initially the legislation will:

1. Set out licensing requirements for residential addiction treatment programs, and
2. Create a College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta to guide professional practice standards.

2 Areas:

1. Licences required for residential addiction treatment programs
2. Professional regulation through the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta

Residential Addiction Treatment Facilities and Services

These facilities provide addiction treatment services and overnight accommodation for people receiving these services. Alberta has about 60 such facilities.

The Act would mandate core requirements for policies and procedures related to:

- Consent and service contracts
- Critical incident reporting
- Record keeping (e.g. treatment plans and staff qualification documents)

Alberta Health is developing information on the application process and compliance. Licensing applications will be accepted starting July 1, 2019. As of **November 1, 2019**, all residential addiction treatment facilities must be licensed. A list of licensed programs will be available on Alberta.ca.

College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta

The Act would amend the *Health Professions Act* to create the new College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta. About 5,000 professionals will be eligible to register. Professional titles will be protected, including, but not limited to:

- Counselling therapist
- Addiction counsellor
- Drug and alcohol counsellor
- Child and youth care counsellor
- Psychotherapist, including for regulated members of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and the College of Alberta Psychologists

In general, the scopes of practice for counselling therapists, addiction counsellors and child and youth care counsellors includes:

- Within a counselling relationship, assess, guide, support and treat individuals or groups within a counselling relationship to enhance, maintain and promote health and wellness.
- Engage in education with respect to the practice of the profession.
- Engage in research related to the practice of the profession.
- Provide restricted activities authorized by the regulations.

For more information, log on to: <https://www.alberta.ca/mental-health-services-protections.aspx>