



VIRGINIA COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

Public Policy/Advocacy Agenda 2019

VCA is dedicated to meeting the needs of Virginia counselors in a variety of work settings. The Association's mission is to advocate for the best counseling practices that enhance human development and functioning throughout the life span and promote public confidence in the counseling profession. VCA supports the following public policy/advocacy priorities:

School/Career Development Counseling

- Support an update to the Standards of Quality (SOQ) such that local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 250 students, with no caseload being larger than 300 in grades Kindergarten through 12.
- Support a revision in the Standards of Accreditation for providing a minimum of 80% of the time for each member of the school counseling staff devoted to the delivery of direct counseling services to students in K12.
- Support increased funding for public education.

Clinical Counseling

- Support proposed regulations that would require that counselor license applicants graduate from CACREP-CORE accredited educational programs following a seven-year phase-in for implementation.
- Monitor regulatory processes on portability.

Health and Equity

- Support legislation, regulations, and public policies that assure that individuals have access to counseling services, including but not limited to mental health, substance use disorder, school, marriage and family, and career development.
- Support legislation, funding, and policies that promote mental health, prevent mental health crises, and adequately treat those with mental and behavioral health conditions.
- Work with the Healthcare for All Virginians Coalition to oppose work requirements for Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Work with our partners in the Reinvest in Supportive Environments for Youth (RISE) coalition to support evidence-informed alternatives to youth incarceration.
- Support and encourage legislation and policies that facilitate the mental health, worth, and dignity of all, especially LGBTQ+ individuals and their families.
- Participate in the work of the policy work group led by Voices for Virginia's Children to create a unified policy agenda for the Campaign for a Trauma-informed Virginia.
- Support and promote the counselor's role in preventing and treating individuals affected by drug abuse, including opioids and methamphetamine.
- Promote policies that increase access to mental health services for incarcerated individuals.

Promotion of the profession

- Assure that policymakers understand the role of counselors working in all settings, the services counselors provide, and the impact of counseling on the health and welfare of Virginians.
- Increase the visibility of counselors in the public arena through participation in stakeholder coalitions and membership in policy boards.
- Work to assure that VCA members are represented in public policy arenas where decisions are made on access to counselor services.
- Seek appointments to commissions and other public bodies.